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The Middle Irish translation of Statius's *Thebaid*: a study in reception

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Declaration

I certify that this thesis has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. This study has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed: 

Date: 28th September 2018

Abstract

This thesis is a study of the reception of Statius's *Thebaid* (*c*. AD 92) in the Middle Irish prose translation, which is believed to have been written in the twelfth century AD. The Irish vernacular translation of the *Thebaid* is part of a larger body of Classical literature translated and adapted in medieval Ireland. In this thesis I examine how this text fits into this wider medieval Irish literary corpus, its relationship to the *Thebaid*'s manuscript tradition, and its associated commentary tradition. This thesis also explores the literary practices that the Irish author employed in developing the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. There are six chapters to this study.

The Middle Irish *Thebaid* is frequently referred to in modern scholarship as *Togail na Tebe* ('The Destruction of Thebes') following the title of George Calder's 1922 edition of the text. In the first chapter, I use evidence from manuscripts, manuscript catalogues and the reviews of Calder's edition to demonstrate that this title was Calder's own creation and explore how this has informed approaches to the narrative in modern literary criticism.

The second chapter focuses on the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries manuscript contexts in which the Middle Irish *Thebaid* survives. I explore the implications of the text's context for reading the vernacular translation of the *Thebaid* and I consider evidence that suggests the text was not static during the Middle Ages, but subject to additions, revisions and errors by the scribes who copied it.

In the third chapter I focus on the inclusion of an historical prologue at the outset of the translation. This prologue details the foundation of Thebes by Cadmus and Oedipus's history. I explore how the removal of Statius's proem and the addition of the prologue may demonstrate the historical interests of the medieval Irish author of the text and consider how the prologue forms an accessus to the narrative. I examine the possible source material for the prologue through close readings of the Cadmus and Oedipus narratives and I argue that the development of this prologue can be seen to link the text to the *Thebaid*'s manuscript tradition. In discussing the Oedipus legend in the Irish translation, I also explore the possibility that this narrative was influence by the Old Irish tale *Aided Óenfir Aife* ('The Death of Aífe's Only Son').

The fourth chapter investigates further the Middle Irish *Thebaid*'s links to the manuscript tradition of Statius's *Thebaid* with a discussion of the commentary material used to interpret and translate Statius's epic in the Irish vernacular. I analyse connections to Lactantius Placidus's late antique commentary on the *Thebaid* and mythographic sources, such as Hyginus's *Fabulae* and the Vatican Mythographers. I argue that the translator's technique

of using additional source material to translate and interpret the *Thebaid* demonstrates his engagement with the grammatical art of interpreting the poets (*enarratio poetarum*).

In the fifth chapter I explore how the author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* approached aspects of Statius's epic style on a macro and micro level. At a macro level I consider sections of the *Thebaid* which the author of the Irish translation chose to omit or abbreviate, such as the poet's narratorial apostrophes and speeches. At a micro level I explore the translator's treatment of Statius's names, such as Greek patronymics and the identification of deities. This chapter also looks at how the author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* used literary techniques from native Irish literature to develop details in the translation narrative.

The sixth chapter is an investigation into the translation and development of similes in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. In this section I survey the similes in the Irish vernacular narrative and make comparison to those to Statius's epic. I discuss the various methodologies used by the translator to interpret the poet's similes. I provide a series of case studies exploring the Irish translator's techniques and consider the influence that similes from narratives such as *Togail Troí* and *Táin Bó Cúailnge* may have had on the translation. I also explore how native medieval Irish literature may have helped inspire the development of new similes in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*.

Overall, this thesis is designed to build upon recent studies of classical literature in medieval Ireland, to highlight how rich the Middle Irish *Thebaid* is as a literary narrative and to demonstrate how fruitful close readings of the text can be for exploring the medieval translator's art.

Lay Summary

This thesis is an analysis of how Statius's Latin epic poem the *Thebaid* (*c*. AD 92) was translated into a prose narrative in medieval Ireland. This translation is believed to have been written in the twelfth-century AD. I refer to the narrative as the Middle Irish *Thebaid* throughout my study. This text is part of a larger body of Classical literature translated and adapted in medieval Ireland.

In this study I demonstrate that the title frequently used by modern scholars for the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, *Togail na Tebe*, was invented by George Calder, whose edition and translation of the text was published in 1922. I examine the impact that the title *Togail na Tebe* has had on studies of this narrative to date. I then explore the context of the late medieval manuscripts in which the text of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* survives. I investigate how the manuscript context can help modern scholars understand the ways in which the narrative was interesting to its medieval Irish audience and I highlight some of the additions, revisions and errors which the late medieval authors and scribes added to the narrative.

This study proceeds to explore the major differences between Statius's *Thebaid* and the Middle Irish translation. I explore how the Irish translator made changes at the beginning and end of the narrative to produce a version of the tale which appeared more historical than Statius's original. I provide an analysis of the tales which make up these additions and explore what their sources may have been. I then investigate evidence that the author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* had access to a version of Lactantius Placidus's *In Statii Thebaida Commentum,* a late antique text made up of explanatory notes to help interpret Statius's *Thebaid*. I consider how the inclusion of information from Lactantius's notes on the *Thebaid* may help modern scholars understand the translation techniques used by the author the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and the needs of his audience. In the next section, I explore some of the major sections which were cut or abbreviated by the Irish author from Statius's *Thebaid* in the translation. This looks specifically at speeches and sections of the *Thebaid* where Statius himself appears to address characters within the narrative. I then examine some of the smaller changes made by the medieval Irish author to the details of Statius's poem by focusing on the ways in which character's names were referenced. Finally, I survey how Statius's similes were translated into the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and consider the various methodologies that the translator used to do this. I also explore the translator's creativity in developing new similes in the Irish vernacular version of the narrative. Throughout my thesis I consider the ways in which the translator of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* used literary styles from native medieval Irish literature to assist in the development of the translation narrative.

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List of Abbreviations

BL	British Library
BL Cat.	*Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum* (O'Grady et al.).
BU	Bibliotecka Uniwersytecka
CELT	Corpus of Electronic Texts
CUP	Cambridge University Press
eDIL	*Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language*
Etym.	Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies* (Lindsay (ed.) and Barney et al. (trans.)).
ISOS	*Irish Script on Screen*
ISTC	*In Statii Thebaida Commentum* (Sweeney (ed.)).
NLS	National Library of Scotland
OUP	Oxford University Press
RIA	Royal Irish Academy
Riss	*Riss in Mundtuirc* (Miles (ed. and trans.)).
TBC-1	*Táin Bó Cúailnge: Recension 1* (O'Rahilly (ed. and trans.)).
TBC-LL	*Táin Bó Cúailnge from the Book of Leinster* (O'Rahilly (ed. and trans.)).
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
TnT	The Middle Irish *Thebaid* (Calder (ed. and trans.)).
TTH	*Togail Troí* from TCD 1319.2.4 (*olim* H.2.17). (Stokes (ed. and trans.)).
TTLL	*Togail Troí* from the Book of Leinster at TCD 1339 (Stokes (ed. and trans.)).
VM I	First Vatican Mythographer (Kulcsár (ed.)).
VM II	Second Vatican Mythographer (Kulcsár (ed.)).

Preface

I first encountered Statius's *Thebaid* in A. D. Melville's English translation as an Honours student in Classical Studies and English Literature at the University of St. Andrews.[1] I found this hyperbolic epic fascinating. So, after leaving St. Andrews, and with a growing interest in Statius's similes and their role in the poem, I went on to write an MSc Classics dissertation at the University of Edinburgh titled 'Animal imagery and man's depravity in Statius's *Thebaid*'.

As my understanding of Latin began to develop while writing up this dissertation, the differences between David Shackleton Bailey's translation of the *Thebaid* and Melville's started to become apparent. I realised the considerable impact that a translation can have on the reading of a text. It was also around this time that I became aware of the Middle Irish *Thebaid*: a narrative which is simultaneously a translation of the *Thebaid* and very unlike it. After a few years of contemplating this juxtaposition, I began to explore the text through reading the English translation in George Calder's edition, *Togail na Tebe*.[2] My interest coincided with the publication of Brent Miles's *Heroic Saga and Classical Epic in Medieval Ireland* in 2011.[3] At the conclusion to Miles's monograph sits an invitation to study, which in many ways, my research replies to.

Although I had originally hoped to focus this project on only the translation and development of similes in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, it soon became clear that the narrative required a broader study to enable me to take on this subject matter. It seemed to me that there needed to be some contextualisation of the Middle Irish text as it has been transmitted in the late medieval manuscripts; that there needed to be an investigation into what was translated from the *Thebaid* and what had been omitted or added; and that there needed to be some consideration of the narrative as part of the wider reception of classical literature in medieval Ireland. Thus, it is hoped that this thesis will provide modern scholars with a better understanding of the Middle Irish translation of the *Thebaid*, so that further research can be developed in the future.

[1] Statius, *Thebaid*, trans. by A. D. Melville (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1992).
[2] *Togail na Tebe: The Thebaid of Statius. The Irish Text*, ed. and trans. by George Calder (Cambridge: CUP, 1922).
[3] Brent Miles, *Heroic Saga and Classical Epic in Medieval Ireland* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2011).

Acknowledgements

In late 2011, Ms Abigail Burnyeat and I met for the first time, over tea, to discuss the possibility of my undertaking a thesis based on the Middle Irish translation of Statius's *Thebaid*. We both recognised the strong possibility that this would be a part-time project, which would probably require self-funding, and, indeed, this is what happened. Consequently, there are many people to thank for their support, encouragement, and patience over the last six years.

I would like to start by thanking my primary supervisor, Ms Abigail Burnyeat, for introducing me to medieval Irish literature and Old Irish, her comprehensive advice, and thoughtful instruction as this study developed. As the initial second supervisor, I thank Prof. Gavin Kelly for his support and for taking the time to help me pursue my studies in Latin. I thank Dr. Donncha O'Rourke for being an enthusiastic replacement in this role, for all his valuable comments on chapter drafts, and for his assistance with Latin. I feel exceptionally fortunate to have had such excellent supervision throughout this project.

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Many new friendships have been made during this PhD, both in the School of Literatures, Languages, and Cultures, and in the School of History, Classics, and Archaeology. I offer warm thanks to Dr. Belinda Washington for the many Latin study sessions and to Dr. Amy Bratton for her feedback on various sections of this thesis. I have benefitted greatly from the intellectual debates and the retelling of medieval Irish tales which came out of 'Celtic Pub' nights with Dr. Chris Yocum and Dr. Eystein Thanisch. I thank them, too, for their helpful comments on my chapters.

I am very lucky to have a wonderful group of friends who have often not only lent a listening ear to any challenges this project brought with it, but also bought me tea, cake, and sometimes supper, while I invested in my research.

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Introduction

0.1 Statius and the Classical corpus of texts in medieval Ireland

Statius's *Thebaid* is an epic poem written in hexameters published *c*. AD 92. The epic, which is written in twelve books, narrates the ancient Greek myth of the civil war between Oedipus's sons, Eteocles and Polynices, for the sovereignty of Thebes. The Middle Irish *Thebaid*, frequently referred to in modern scholarship as *Togail na Tebe* ('The Destruction of Thebes') after George Calder's 1922 edition, is a prose translation of Statius's epic.[4] This text survives in two manuscripts which date from the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries; however, the language in which it is written is generally considered to represent an original from the twelfth century AD (see **Chapter 2:6**).[5]

Two other narratives based on Statius's works survive from medieval Ireland. The first, *Riss in Mundtuirc* ('The Tale of the Necklace', hereafter *Riss*), is a history of the troubles caused at Thebes and Argos by the possession of a necklace, originally made for Harmonia, by the god Vulcan.[6] A version of this tale was incorporated into the text of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* in a manuscript held at Edinburgh, NLS (Adv.MS.72.1.8) under the title *Scél an Mundtuirc*.[7] The second Statian narrative is based on the poet's unfinished epic the *Achilleid*, the extant text of which recounts the early life of the hero Achilles. In medieval Ireland, the adaptation of the *Achilleid* took the form of both prose and verse. The former survives in two manuscripts incorporated into the text of the third recension of *Togail Troí*, a prose adaptation of the late-antique prose narrative *De Excidio Troiae Historia* by pseudo-Dares; the poetic version survives independently in a single manuscript.[8]

Statius's *Thebaid* and the *Achilleid* have survived through an extensive manuscript culture including extant texts, commentaries, *vitae* ('biographies'), and *accessus* ('academic

[4] In **Chapter 1** I argue that the title *Togail na Tebe* was Calder's creation and discuss how this title has informed approaches to the narrative to date.
[5] Cross-references are given by Chapter and then by section.
[6] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 59. For detailed discussion of this tale, see Brent Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*: The Tale of Harmonia's Necklace and the Study of the Theban Cycle in Medieval Ireland', *Ériu*, 57 (2007), 67–112.
[7] *Scél an Mundtuirc* is discussed in **Chapter 2:2.2** and **Chapter 4:5**. See also Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', pp. 76–79.
[8] The prose and verse versions are available in Donncha Ó hAodha, 'The Irish Version of Statius' *Achilleid*', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature*, 79 (1979), 83–138. This narrative is transmitted in the third recension of *Togail Troí* in both Dublin, RIA, MS D iv 2, fols. 31^{v} b4–33^{v} b16 and Dublin, King's Inns, MS 12, fols. 14^{r} a33–18^{r} a32. This version of *Togail Troí* also includes an episode relating the tale of Jason and Hypsipyle, which is known to have come from the Middle Irish *Thebaid* (*TnT*, 1873–2056), see Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 63.

introductions'), which are testament to the poet's popularity throughout the medieval period.[9] In *The Medieval Tradition of Thebes* Dominique Battles highlights that during the Middle Ages Statius 'ranked among Virgil, Ovid, Horace and Juvenal as a canonical author'.[10] The *Thebaid* flourished during this period and many vernacular versions of the tale were produced in verse across the continent. For example, the anonymous Old French *Roman de Thèbes* (*c*. AD 1155–60), Giovanni Boccaccio's *Teseida* (*c*. AD 1340–41) and John Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes* (1420–22).[11] The *Thebaid* is also known to have influenced the works of Dante and later Chaucer.[12]

In contrast, the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and other Irish adaptations of classical narratives were created primarily in prose.[13] Some of the principal examples are: *Togail Troí,* which survives in three recensions; an adaptation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, *Imtheachta Aeniasa* ('The Adventures of Aeneas'); *Scéla Alexandair* ('The Tale of Alexander'), which is partially sourced from Orosius's *Historia adversum paganos* ('History Against the Pagans'); and *In Cath Catharda* ('The Civil War') from Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.[14]

There are considerable abbreviations and digressions from Statius's poem in the Irish translation. These include a historical prologue explaining the origins of the Thebans which was incorporated into the beginning of the narrative, replacing Statius's proem (see **Chapter 3**); a colophon from the translator bringing the narrative to a close (see **Chapter 1:8**); numerous additions throughout the text providing exegesis on the poet's obscure allusions (see **Chapter 4** and **Chapter 5**); and the extensive abbreviation of the epic, for instance, the removal of the poet's narratorial apostrophes and the shortening, or omission, of many speeches (see **Chapter 5:2.1** and **Chapter 5:2.2**). Despite these alterations, the Middle Irish

[9] For a comprehensive list of these manuscripts see Harald Anderson, *The Manuscripts of Statius*, 3 vols (Arlington, Virginia: Harald Anderson, Revised Edition, 2009), I. For an overview of the reception of Statius's works in the Middle Ages, see Dominique Battles, *The Medieval Tradition of Thebes: History and Narrative in the OF Roman de Thèbes, Boccaccio, Chaucer, and Lydgate* (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 1–17.
[10] Battles, p. 1.
[11] Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes* relies partly on a French prose redaction of the Old French *Roman de Thèbes*, see Battles, pp. 149–52.
[12] See Peter Heslin, 'Statius in Dante's *Commedia*', in *Brill's Companion to Statius*, ed. by William J. Dominik, Carole Elizabeth Newlands, and Kyle Gervais (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 512–26; Battles, pp. 85–141; and Winthrop Wetherbee, 'Statius', in *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature: Volume 1. 800–1558*, ed. by Rita Copeland (Oxford: OUP, 2016), pp. 227–46.
[13] See Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Classical Compositions in Medieval Ireland: The Literary Context', in *Translations from Classical Literature: Imtheachta Aeniasa and Stair Ercuil a bás*, ed. by Kevin Murray, Irish Texts Society, Subsidiary Series 17 (London: Irish Texts Society, 2006), pp. 1–19 (p. 10) and Nessa Ní Shéaghdha, 'Translations and adaptations into Irish', *Celtica*, 16 (1984), 107–24.
[14] An excellent overview of classical narrative adaptation and translation texts in both prose and verse can be found in Ralph O'Connor, 'Irish narrative literature and the Classical tradition, 900–1300', in *Classical Literature and Learning in Medieval Irish Narrative*, ed. by Ralph O'Connor (Cambridge: Brewer, 2014), pp. 1–22 (pp. 13–17).

Thebaid retains the main outline of Statius's epic and is essentially a translation of the poem in its entirety.[15] In this way, the Middle Irish *Thebaid* stands apart from other medieval narratives based on the *Thebaid*, such as *Roman de Thèbes* and Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes*, which diverge considerably from the original narrative structure.[16]

In the entry on the Middle Irish *Thebaid* in *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopaedia* Barbara Hillers writes, '*Togail na Tebe* follows the Latin original more closely than other Irish classical adaptations, which may be the reason why the Irish translation is less successful as a narrative and has not received much critical attention.'[17] While it is true that the Middle Irish *Thebaid* has received little critical attention to date, there has been no study to support the statement that this narrative is 'less successful' than other medieval Irish adaptations. As Rita Copeland demonstrates in *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages*, medieval vernacular translation took place within complex systems of rhetoric and hermeneutics inherited through the theories of classical and late antique authors such as Cicero, Horace and Quintilian.[18] Brent Miles shows that medieval Irish authors participated in these rhetorical systems and that both classical adaptation and native saga literature were influenced by techniques which originated in ancient literary theory.[19] Miles explores how rhetorical techniques such as *amplificatio* ('expansion'), *ecphrasis* (literally 'speaking out', but more generally understood as 'description') and *imitatio* ('imitation') may have helped shape *Togail Troí* and the Irish saga narrative *Táin Bó Cúailnge*.[20] Like Miles, I view the Middle Irish *Thebaid* within a wider context of medieval literary techniques and argue that the translator can be seen to follow many of the same literary practices as other medieval Irish authors of both classical adaptations and vernacular narratives. By doing so, I move away from the idea of what makes a 'successful' or 'less successful' translation or adaptation and engage with the literary practices that the Irish author employed in developing his narrative. Before moving on, however, it is worth considering where the idea that the Middle Irish *Thebaid* is a 'less successful' narrative than other medieval Irish classical adaptations may have come from.

[15] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 58.
[16] For discussion of the Theban narrative in the Old French *Roman de Thébes* and Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes* see Battles, pp. 19–59 and pp. 145–74.
[17] Barbara Hillers, '*Togail na Tebe*', in *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. by John T. Koch (Santa Barbara, California: ABC–CLIO, 2006), p. 1679.
[18] Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), pp. 1–8.
[19] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, pp. 15–50 and pp. 95–144.
[20] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, pp. 95–144 and pp. 145–93.

0.2 Calder's edition and hostile receptions to the text

Professor Donald Mackinnon made the first attempt at an edition of the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. This was published in a series in *The Celtic Review* between May 1911 and June 1916.[21] Mackinnon died on Christmas Day in 1914 and his work on the text was left unfinished.[22] Calder was preparing an edition at same time which, as he notes in the preface to *Togail na Tebe*, he had already started working on in 1910.[23] Calder apparently had concerns about the quality of Mackinnon's publication and observes that:

> [F]eeling that Professor Mackinnon's work on Statius was not likely to hold the field permanently, I continued working at the text as opportunity offered; and soon after the cessation of the *Celtic Review* a text and translation were completed by me and laid aside, the war rendering futile all hope of immediate publication.[24]

While there is no dedicated review of Mackinnon's work on the text, in Osborn J. Bergin's review of Calder's edition he writes of Mackinnon's efforts that 'the work was so unscholarly that it may be ignored'.[25] This view seems to confirm Calder's reservations.

It is now almost a hundred years since Calder published *Togail na Tebe* and during this time the reception of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* has been closely connected to the edition. One possible reason for the lack of research on the Middle Irish *Thebaid* to date may be the hostility with which Calder's edition was received in the 1920s and early 1930s. The reviews appear to have made their mark on scholarly opinion of both the value of the edition and the text itself. Reviews of the edition were, for the most part, highly critical, and it seems possible to me that they consequently deterred scholars from working with the text. For instance, in the *Classical Review* John Fraser writes,

> This work will interest such classical scholars as care to see what happened to a Latin epic in the process of adaptation into late mediaeval Irish romance. The result has, as literature, no value whatever; but it is of very considerable importance in the history of the Latinisation of Western Europe, for no Irish literary productions show so clearly as the translations of Vergil, Lucan, Statius, etc., that Irish writers remained almost totally unaffected by the form of Latin literature.[26]

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[21] Donald Mackinnon, 'The Gaelic Version of the *Thebaid* of Statius', *The Celtic Review*, 7–10 (1911–1916).
[22] The end of Mackinnon's edition corresponds with *TnT*, 3191.
[23] Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, p. vii.
[24] Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, p. vii.
[25] Osborn J. Bergin, review of *Togail na Tebe. The Thebaid of Statius*, ed. by George Calder, *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 12, 46 (1923), 320–22 (p. 322).
[26] John Fraser, 'Statius in Irish', review of *Togail na Tebe: The Thebaid of Statius*, ed. by George Calder, *The Classical Review*, 37, 7/8 (1923), 186–87 (p. 186).

Fraser also notes problematic aspects to Calder's English translations which 'are not quite fair to the translator of the Latin or to the translator of the Irish'.[27] Although Fraser's meaning here is uncertain, his words may imply that Calder could do a better job.[28]

While Bergin's review compliments the physical quality of the edition and observes that 'the work was worth doing', he focuses mainly on the errors of the editor, and notes 'Many pages of this review could be filled with blunders and inaccuracies. The book will not add to Dr. Calder's reputation.'[29] Bergin highlighted considerable problems with Calder's interpretation of the Irish text and, subsequently, his English translation.[30] Bergin's attitude towards Statius's works is also acerbic. His review begins, 'The pedestrian muse of Statius is not likely in these days to win for the poet a fresh hearing among lovers of literature or students of antiquarian lore.'[31] Like Fraser, Bergin fails to see any literary value in the text and considers that 'The subject-matter was stale and conventional even in the time of Statius.'[32] He concedes, '[F]or linguistic purposes such translations are useful'.[33] Bergin's opinion of Statius was by no means a solitary one at the time and it was not until the early 1980s that classical scholars began to reassess the value of the poet's works.[34] If Fraser and Bergin's attention to Calder's errors and the unfashionability of Statius had failed to put any contemporary readers off, then the book's price of forty-two shillings may well have been the final obstacle for anyone considering purchasing it.[35] Bergin notes that, 'the price is likely to keep it out of the class-room, at least in Ireland'.[36] His comment seems to imply Ireland's financial situation following the War of Independence (1919–1921) and during the Irish Civil War that followed.[37]

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[27] Fraser, 'Statius in Irish', p. 187.
[28] See L. Winifred Faraday, review of *The Irish Aeneid* ed. and trans. by George Calder, *The Celtic Review*, 4, 15 (1908), 287–88, and *Imtheachta Aeniasa: The Irish Aeneid*, ed. and trans. by George Calder, Irish Texts Society, Main Series 6 (London: Irish Texts Society, 1907).
[29] Bergin, p. 320 and p. 322.
[30] Bergin, pp. 321–22.
[31] Bergin, p. 320.
[32] Bergin, p. 320.
[33] Bergin, p. 320.
[34] See Carole E. Newlands, Kyle Gervais, and William J. Dominik, 'Reading Statius', in *Brill's Companion to Statius*, ed. by Dominik, Newlands, and Gervais, pp. 3–27 (pp. 7–13). For an overview of dismissive approaches to the *Thebaid*, see Frederick M. Ahl, 'Statius's *Thebaid*: A Reconsideration', *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Rom sim Spiegel der neueren Forschung*, 2, 35.2 (1986), 2803–2912 (pp. 2804–07).
[35] See Fraser, 'Statius in Irish', p. 187 and Bergin, p. 320. By comparison, a two-volume text of *Iomarbhágh na bhFileadh: The Contention of the Bards* edited by L. McKenna and produced by the Irish Texts Society between 1918–1920 cost twenty-one shillings.
[36] Bergin, p. 320.
[37] There is little by the way of official data on Ireland's national accounts during the 1920s; however, a brief overview can be found in Cormac Ó Gráda, *Ireland. A New Economic History* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1994), pp. 380–403.

Edward J. Gwyn's review for *Hermathena* in 1930 went further in actively discouraging study of the narrative by classical scholars. Its opening statement reads:

> It may be said at once that Dr. Calder's volume is of more interest to the medievalist than to the classical scholar. If any Latinist should take it up with the hope of gaining some fresh light on the text of Statius he will be disappointed. He will find a free paraphrase of the Thebaid, but no attempt at a literal translation.[38]

Despite his apparently dismissive attitude towards the Irish narrative, Gwyn observes that it is full of additions and amplification: he even made the first attempts at exploring some of these interpolations.[39] Somewhat inexplicably, Gwyn failed to recognise the possibility that the author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* had access to Lactantius Placidus's commentary in some form.[40]

It is undeniable that there are problems with Calder's edition of the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. While this thesis does not aim to provide a survey of the issues arising from Calder's edition, **Chapter 1** does explore the effect that the editorial construction of the title *Togail na Tebe* has had on the modern reception of the narrative. Nevertheless, despite the errors in language and translation, Calder's edition was a considerable achievement at the time. Unlike Mackinnon's work, Calder's Irish text is generally clear on when he uses the manuscript Edinburgh, NLS, Adv.MS.72.1.8 and when he uses London, BL, Egerton 1781; the line numbers he provides to show the narrative's relationship to the *Thebaid* remain a useful tool; and, used with caution, Calder's vocabulary list, combined with modern day access to the *Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language* (hereafter *eDIL*), is also a helpful guide for those working through the narrative's challenging Middle Irish. Moreover, his edition provides a usable text of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* with a facing English translation, enabling access to the material for modern scholars across disciplines.

0.3 Literary criticism and the Middle Irish *Thebaid* from the 1960s to the present day

After the reviews of Calder's edition there was only a passing interest in the text until the early 1960s.[41] Robert T. Meyer then published an article on 'The Middle-Irish Version of the

[38] Edward J. Gwyn, 'A Medieval Version of the *Thebaid* of Statius', *Hermathena*, 20, 45 (1930), 435–39 (p. 435).
[39] Gwyn, pp. 436–39.
[40] Gwyn, p. 439.
[41] For example, Edward G. Cox, 'Classical Traditions in Medieval Irish Literature', *Philological Quarterly* (1924), 267–84 (p. 282). The scribal note to the Middle Irish *Thebaid* in Egerton 1781 and

Thebaid of Statius'.[42] In his study, Meyer acknowledges that Statius remained unfashionable to modern scholars but highlights the poet's popularity in medieval times. Meyer views the medieval Irish interest in the narrative from the perspective of the title *Togail na Tebe*, which he sees as fitting into the wider framework of native Irish saga types (see **Chapter 1:5**).[43] He briefly considers the manuscripts of the text and highlights some of the accompanying marginalia from Adv.MS.72.1.8 and the scribal note which follows the Middle Irish *Thebaid* in Egerton 1781.[44] Meyer makes various useful comments about the narrative. For instance, he observes the inclusion of the account of the foundation of Thebes in Cadmus and Oedipus's tale at the beginning of the translation and makes some preliminary remarks regarding the use of Irish similes, descriptive techniques, and stylistic qualities in the narrative.[45] Perhaps the most significant aspect of Meyer's research, however, was his realisation that the translator must have had access to 'something like the learned scholia of Lactantius Placidus'.[46]

While Meyer was apparently not an enthusiast of the *Thebaid* or its medieval Irish counterpart, he is not dismissive of the narrative and his article does begin to consider the literary aspects of the translator's rendering of Statius's epic.[47] This article was one of series which Meyer produced on classical translations and adaptations in medieval Ireland, an interest which he occasionally pursued throughout his academic career.[48] He later produced an edition of the sections of the text from the Middle Irish *Thebaid* which survive in manuscript Dublin, TCD, MS 1298 (*olim* H.2.7).[49]

In the late twentieth century, interest in the corpus of classical translation and adaptation texts from medieval Ireland began to develop and scholars started to look more closely at the influence of classical narratives on Irish literature. [50] Some dedicated studies on

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the marginalia in Adv.MS.72.1.8 appear to have been of some interest, see Charles Plummer, 'On the Colophons and Marginalia of Irish Scribes', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 12 (1926), 11–44 (p. 19 and p. 30).

[42] Robert T. Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish version of the *Thebaid* of Statius', *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters*, 47 (1962), 687–99.

[43] Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish Version of the *Thebaid*', p. 688.

[44] Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish Version of the *Thebaid*', p. 689.

[45] Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish Version of the *Thebaid*', pp. 691–99.

[46] Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish Version of the *Thebaid*', pp. 696–97.

[47] Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish Version of the *Thebaid*', p. 688.

[48] See Robert T. Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish *Pharsalia* of Lucan', *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters*, 44 (1959), 355–63; 'The Middle-Irish *Odyssey* and Celtic Folklore', *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters*, 46 (1961), 258–60; 'The Middle-Irish version of the *Aeneid*', *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, 11 (1966), 97–108; 'The Middle-Irish version of the story of Troy', *Études celtiques*, 17 (1980), 205–18.

[49] Robert T. Meyer, 'The T.C.D. fragments of the *Togail na Tebe*', *Trivium*, 2 (1967), 121–32.

[50] See William B. Stanford, 'Towards a History of Classical Influences in Ireland', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature*, 70 (1970), 13–91 and William Stanford, *Ireland and the Classical Tradition* (Dublin: A. Figgis, 1976, repr. Irish Academic Press, 1984), pp. 73–89.

these adaptations in Ireland were published in the 1990s, for instance, Leslie Diane Myrick's study on literary-cultural synthesis in *Togail Troí* and Erich Poppe's *A New Introduction to Imtheachta Aeniasa*.[51] Often overlooked, there is also a short study by Arianna Punzi on the influence of Statius scholia on the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and the *Roman de Thèbes*.[52]

There is also a study by John Harris which sets out to demonstrate the influence of oral narrative techniques on the adaptations *Imtheachta Aeniasa, In Cath Catharda* and *Togail na Tebe*.[53] In his chapter on the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, '*In Togail Na Tebe*: Warring Styles behind the War at Thebes', Harris argues that 'The *Togail* is not about the *Thebaid*: it and the *Thebaid* are both about an archetypal epoch-ending war of the heroes.'[54] Harris's approach in viewing the Irish translator's reworkings of the *Thebaid* in the context of oral tradition fails to take account of the literary context in which the narrative was developed and his points are, for the most part, unsupported. One example will suffice to show the limitations of his study. Harris argues that many of the differences between the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and Statius's epic can be explained away as carelessness of the part of the Irish redactor.[55] For instance, Harris writes,

> Misread, too, is the end of the exchange between Apollo and Diana (*Th*. 9.663–69). The verb tense of Diana's parting words is mistaken, making it by no means clear that she intends to avenge a killing not yet committed (*TT* 3722).[56]

The assumption that the Irish translator made an error in the verb tense at *TnT*, 3722, is in itself a misreading. The mistake in the verb tense which Harris refers to appears to be based on the translation of *ros-muirfe*, which Calder translates as 'that slew him'. The error here is in fact one made by Calder in the translation of the Irish text to English, which should read 'who will kill him'. This example is further complicated by the fact the Irish text is not a direct translation of Diana's words, 'nostris fas sit saevire sagittis' ('Let my arrows too have the right to rage') (*Thebaid*, IX.667).[57] Thus, Harris fails to engage with the problems of Calder's edition before

[51] Leslie Diane Myrick, *From the Excidio Troiae Historia to the Togail Troí: Literary–Cultural Synthesis in a Medieval Irish Adaptation of Dares' Troy Tale* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1993) and Erich Poppe, *A New Introduction to Imtheachta Aeniasa: The Irish Aeneid - the Classical Epic from an Irish Perspective*, Irish Texts Society, Subsidiary Series 3 (London: Irish Texts Society, 1995).
[52] Arianna Punzi 'I volgarizzamenti della *Tebaide* nella cultura romanza ed in quella irlandese', *Cultura Neolatina*, 1 (1990), 7–43. An overview of Punzi's research is provided in **Chapter 2:7** and I build upon her arguments in **Chapter 3**.
[53] John Harris, *Adaptations of Roman Epic in Medieval Ireland: Three Studies in the Interplay of Erudition and Oral Tradition* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), p. 26.
[54] Harris, p. 162.
[55] Harris, p. 181.
[56] Harris, p. 183.
[57] See **Chapter 4:3.4** for a full discussion of these lines.

making confident statements about the translator's approach to Statius's narrative. In arguing for the influence of oral narrative techniques on the classical adaptations in medieval Ireland Harris also refrains from engaging with the possibility that any of these texts may have been influenced by their authors' wider knowledge of Irish literature in a written medium, or by any scholastic tradition associated with those classical narratives, such as commentaries.

Since the 1990s considerable progress has been made in the study of classical translation and adaptation narratives in medieval Ireland and interest continues to develop across academic disciplines.[58] As well as Erich Poppe's studies on *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, some important examples include the same scholar's studies of the historical and literary context of *Togail Troí* and analogous narratives in Wales and Iceland.[59] Focusing mainly on *In Cath Catharda*, Poppe has also begun to explore more closely the varied source material used by Irish authors to develop readings of classical literature in the Irish vernacular.[60] Michael Clarke's contributions to the field include the reassessment of the concept of the 'heroic age' in medieval Irish literature and more recently explorations into the source material and wider influences on the development of *Togail Troí*.[61] As mentioned above, Miles's *Heroic Saga* brings together ideas of how classical learning and education influenced the translations and adaptation of Classical epic as well as the native narratives. Following a workshop on 'Medieval Irish Sagas and the Classical Tradition' at the University of Aberdeen in 2011, Ralph O'Connor also edited a volume of essays which explores a range of subjects focusing on the theme of classical literature in medieval Irish narrative.[62]

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[58] For an overview, see O'Connor, 'Irish narrative literature', pp. 1–22.

[59] For example, Erich Poppe, 'The Matter of Troy and Insular Versions of Dares's *De Excidio Troiae Historia*: an exercise in textual typology', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Sprachwissenshaft*, 19, 2 (2009), 253–99; Erich Poppe and Dagmar Schlüter, 'Greece, Ireland, Ulster and Troy: Of Hybrid Origins and Heroes', in *Other Nations: The Hybridization of Medieval Insular Mythology and Identity*, ed. by Wendy Marie Hoofnagle and Wolfram R. Keller (Heidelberg: Winter, 2011), pp. 127–143; and Erich Poppe, 'The Epic Styles of *In Cath Catharda*: *imitatio*, *amplificatio*, and *aemulatio*', in *Adapting Text and Styles in a Celtic Context: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Processes of Literary Transfer in the Middle Ages; Studies in Honour of Erich Poppe*, ed. by Axel Harlos, Neele Harlos and Erich Poppe, Studien Und Texte Zur Keltologie; Bd. (Münster: Nodus Publikationen, 2016), pp. 1–20.

[60] Erich Poppe, 'Scholia: a medieval learned background to *In Cath Catharda*', in *Mélanges en l'honneur de Pierre–Yves Lambert*, ed. by Guillaume Oudaer, Gaël Hily, and Herve Le Bihan (Rennes: Tir, 2015), 431–39; Erich Poppe, 'Lucan's *Bellum Civile* in Ireland: structure and sources', *Studia Hibernica*, 42 (2016), 97–120; see also, Cillian O'Hogan, 'Reading Lucan and his scholia in medieval Ireland: *In Cath Catharda* and its sources', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 68 (2014), 21–49.

[61] Michael Clarke, 'International Influences on the Later Development of *Togail Troí*', in *Adapting Text and Styles in a Celtic Context*, ed. by Harlos, Harlos, and Poppe, pp. 75–102; Michael Clarke, 'The Extended Prologue of *Togail Troí*: From Adam to the Wars of Troy', *Ériu*, 64 (2014), 23–106; and Michael Clarke, 'An Irish Achilles and a Greek Cú Chulainn', in *Ulidia 2: Proceedings of the Second International Conference on the Ulster Cycle of Tales*, ed. by Ruairí Ó hUiginn, and Brian Ó Catháin (Maynooth: An Sagart, 2009), pp. 238–51.

[62] Ralph O'Connor, ed., *Classical Literature and Learning in Medieval Irish Narrative* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2014).

While there has been much progress in studies of classical literature in medieval Ireland, most recent studies focus on *Togail Troí*, *Imtheachta Aeniasa* or *In Cath Catharda*; the Middle Irish *Thebaid* remains somewhat left behind in the conversation. Robert R. Edwards's recent article 'Medieval Statius: Belatedness and Authority' in *Brill's Companion to Statius* does include a short section on the Middle Irish *Thebaid* which briefly highlights the commentary and *accessus* traditions within which the text was developed.[63] This study also notes some of the techniques the Irish translator used to adapt Statius's epic for the Irish audience.[64] Miles's study and edition of the *Riss* also demonstrates the interest that the medieval Irish had in what he calls the 'Theban Cycle'.[65] Miles highlights the importance of the antique grammatical concept of *enarratio poetarum* to the production of the *Riss* through the Irish author's engagement with the antique commentary tradition associated with the *Thebaid*.[66]

In this thesis, I set out to provide a study on the reception of the *Thebaid* in the Middle Irish translation. I build on previous studies and investigate how the interpretative strategies associated with *enarratio poetarum* can be seen in the Irish translator's approach to developing the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. My intention is to build upon the study of classical literature in medieval Ireland to date to develop greater understanding into the variety of translation techniques which were available to the author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and to show the creativity with which the translator engaged with Statius's epic.

0.4 An overview of the chapters

By necessity, the first section of this study focuses on the question of the title of the Middle Irish translation. The title *Togail na Tebe* was Calder's own creation and its usage has had considerable influence on how modern scholars have perceived the medieval Irish translation of the *Thebaid* to date. As a result of Calder's title, the Middle Irish *Thebaid* has become associated with the medieval Irish literary genre *togla* ('destructions') and I explore how this has informed modern readings of the text. The phrase *togail na Tebe* was used in the translation and I consider how this usage relates to Statius's text and what associations it might have had for medieval Irish scholars. In the absence of a title for the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, are there any

[63] Robert R. Edwards, 'Medieval Statius: Belatedness and Authority', in *Brill's Companion to Statius*, ed. by Dominik, Newlands and Gervais, pp. 497–511 (pp. 500–02). His article also gives an overview of the Irish *Achilleid*, see Edwards, 'Medieval Statius', pp. 502–03.
[64] Edwards, 'Medieval Statius', p. 502.
[65] Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*, p. 68.
[66] Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', p. 69.

other possibilities within medieval Irish literature for understanding what the text might have been called?

In the second chapter I survey the Middle Irish *Thebaid* in its manuscript contexts and consider why it is important to keep these contexts in mind when making literary observations on the narrative. I explore whether the text was static in its composition or if there been additions, revisions, and errors introduced through its manuscript tradition. In investigating these contexts, the question arises, can these manuscripts and their associated scribal links reveal anything of the literary or historical interests of the fourteenth and fifteenth century compilers and readers of the texts?

The third strand of this study is a focused investigation of the development of the historical prologue at the outset in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* (*TnT*, 1–146). This prologue focuses on the foundation of Thebes by Cadmus and the history of Oedipus. Its inclusion raises questions about the purpose of its inclusion in the narrative, particularly about the author's intentions in doing so. Might this prologue help us understand the interest in the Theban war as part within the wider corpus of classical adaptations in medieval Ireland? In this chapter the possible source material for the prologue is also investigated.

In the fourth section, the Middle Irish translation's links to the *Thebaid*'s manuscript tradition are further developed. I explore evidence that the Irish translator of the *Thebaid* used Lactantius's Late Antique commentary on the epic and other related Statius scholia to develop his Theban narrative. I argue that this demonstrates the Irish author's engagement with the grammatical art of *enarratio poetarum* and shows the wide range of techniques, such as exegesis and *amplificatio*, which medieval translation could deploy. This chapter also begins to consider the creativity of the Irish translator of the *Thebaid* in interpreting and reinterpreting his sources.

The fifth section of this study focuses on how the Irish translator approaches aspects of Statius's epic style. Firstly, I consider some of the larger sections of the *Thebaid* which the translator chose to omit or abbreviate, concentrating on the poet's narratorial apostrophes and speeches. Secondly, I investigate how the Irish author's interpretative concerns are demonstrable through more specific details in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*'s translation of Statius's Greek patronymics, forenames, geographical epithets and deities, as well as its constant clarification of who is Theban or Greek in the narrative.

Following on from this, the final chapter concentrates on the translation and development of similes in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. I provide a survey of the similes in the *Thebaid* and those in its Middle Irish counterpart, whether they be translations from Statius or new creations. The various methodologies employed by the Irish author in translating Statius's

similes are explored with case studies on each different type of approach. What aspects of the epic might have informed the translator's approach to Statius's similes and what influences might have inspired the new similes created by the Irish author?

The conclusion provides an overview of my findings and reflects on the extensive influences at work in the translation of *Thebaid* into Middle Irish. This includes the resources available to the Irish author to interpret Statius's epic, the author's intentions in translating the poem, and the how other medieval Irish literary narratives, classical and native, may have helped shape this prose translation.

Appendix I provides a comparison of the speeches from the *Thebaid* and those which appear in the Middle Irish translation. This research is the basis for my discussion of the reception of speeches from Statius's epic in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* in **Chapter 5:2.2**. Appendix II is a comparison of similes between the *Thebaid* and the Middle Irish translation. This data is used to form my discussion of the medieval Irish author's translation of Statius's similes and the development of new similes in the vernacular narrative.

0.5 Editions and English translations

All citations from the *Thebaid* are from David Roy Shackleton Bailey's edition and translation of the text.[67] Any changes to Shackleton Bailey's English translation are referenced in the main text or footnotes.[68] For the text of Lactantius Placidus, Hyginus, and the First and Second Vatican Mythographers (hereafter VM I and VM II) I have used the most recent Latin editions available and, unless stated, the English translations are my own.[69]

This thesis uses George Calder's edition *Togail na Tebe* (hereafter *TnT*) for citations of the Irish text and all English translations of the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. The problems associated with this edition are highlighted above (**0:2**). Where necessary, I have made silent changes to Calder's English translations where his language is archaic; where he made errors in translating the Irish text; and where he failed to include important textual information from the Irish, such as omitting an *id est*.[70] Where my own interpretation differs considerably from

[67] Statius, *Thebaid and Achilleid*, ed. and trans. by David Roy Shackleton Bailey, 2 vols, Loeb Classical Library 207 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003).
[68] The only exception is references to 'Jove', which I change to 'Jupiter'.
[69] Lactantius Placidus, *In Statii Thebaida Commentum*, ed. by Robert Dale Sweeney, 1 vol (Stutgartt: Teubner, 1997); Hyginus, *Fabulae*, ed. by Peter K. Marshall (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1993); and *Mythographi Vaticani I et II*, ed. by Péter Kulcsár, Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina 91C (Turnhout: Brepols, 1987).
[70] Normalisations of Calder's English translation are as follows: did ('didst'), have ('hast'), Jupiter ('Jove'), my ('mine'), that is ('to wit'), 'till' with 'until', two ('twain'), you ('thou'), you ('thee'), your ('thy'), 'howbeit' from *cid tra acht* replaced with 'however', and *imthusa* translated as 'concerning, *eDIL* s.v. *imthús*.

Calder's English translation, I have made a note of it either in the main body of my discussion or in the footnotes.

On occasion I have checked the manuscripts for the correct transcription of the Irish text: where this is the case, I have made a note of it in the footnotes. Calder's edition uses square brackets to indicate both the transcript incorporated from Egerton 1781 into the Irish text from Adv.MS.72.1.8 and to show the editor's own corrections on the text.[71] In both the Irish text and English translation, I show the material from Egerton 1781 in italics. I retain square brackets for Calder's corrections of the Irish text. I also use square brackets for any ellipses in quotations, to indicate where I have changed the case of a letter, and to show where a word has been added to provide clarity.

[71] Apart from the material at *TnT*, 1–82 from Egerton 1781, fol. 87^{r} a–87^{v} a and *TnT*, 3547–3892 from Egerton 1781, fols. 116^{v} b–119^{v} a, which are referenced in the notes below the Irish text.

Chapter One

What's in a tale title? *Togail na Tebe* as an editorial construction

1.1 Introduction

When the Middle Irish *Thebaid* was edited and translated into English by Calder in 1922, he gave it the title *Togail na Tebe: The Thebaid of Statius. The Irish Text*. The title *Togail na Tebe* was Calder's own creation and while this usage has been adopted within medieval Irish studies to date, throughout this study, I refer to the narrative as the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. I use this designation as a point of reference based on the Middle Irish language in which the narrative is written (see **Chapter 2:6**) and because it is a translation of Statius's *Thebaid*.

In this chapter, the possible reasons behind Calder's choice of title are explored. Where might this titular construction have developed from? How might the titles of narratives given on the two known medieval Irish Tale-Lists, A and B, have informed modern scholarly expectations as to what the Middle Irish *Thebaid*'s title should be? These Middle Irish Tale-Lists appear to represent the tales that Irish *filid* ('poets') were expected to know.[72] List A survives in two copies and List B survives in the narrative *Airec menman Uraird maic Coisse* ('The Stratagem of Urard mac Coise') preserved in three manuscripts.[73] The tales in the lists are classified by event-type: for instance, *togla* ('attacks, destructions'), *tána* ('cattle-raids'), and *immrama* ('sea-voyages'). In contemporary approaches to defining and classifying genre in medieval Irish narratives, the tale-lists have been used as an important indication of subject type.[74] For some scholars in the early twentieth century, these tale-lists also helped to form ideas of different classes or groupings of medieval Irish literature.[75]

In this chapter, I explore how the title *Togail Larisa*, which is an otherwise unknown narrative, on Tale-List B has been linked to the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. Why might this presumed association be problematic and what evidence have scholars used to support it? I also examine if connections can be made between the medieval Irish *togail* ('destruction')

[72] Proinsias Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Study, 1980), pp. 24–30; Gregory Toner, 'Reconstructing the Earliest Irish Tale Lists', *Éigse*, 32 (2000), 88–120; and Elva Johnston, *Literacy and Identity in Early Medieval Ireland*, Studies in Celtic History 23 (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2013), pp. 137–38.

[73] List A is found in Dublin, TCD, MS 1339, pp. 189b–190b, and Dublin, TCD, MS 1336, col. 797 (*olim* H.3.17); and List B is found Dublin, RIA, MS 23 N 10, pp. 29–32; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B 512, fols. 109^{r} col. 2–111^{r} col. 1; and London, BL, Harley 5280, fols. 58^{r}–63^{r}. Printed versions of the tale-lists can be found in Mac Cana, pp. 41–63.

[74] Mac Cana, p. 30.

[75] An overview can be found in Erich Poppe, *Of Cycles and Other Critical Matters. Some Issues in Medieval Irish Literary History and Criticism*, E. C. Quiggin memorial lectures 9 (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, University of Cambridge, 2008), pp. 7–9.

narratives recorded in the tale-lists and the classical epic translations and adaptations in Middle Irish. Overall, this chapter asks what scholars should call the Middle Irish translation of Statius's *Thebaid*? Are there any possibilities which have been overlooked?

1.2 *Togail na Tebe* and the naming of other classical epic tales

Before I discuss the difficulties associated with Calder's choice of title, it is worth highlighting the varied nature of titles in both Roman and medieval texts. For classical texts, Nicholas Horsfall observes that:

> The "title" of a work of Greek or Latin literature, can mean in concrete and physical terms, one, or more than one – of four things: (i) the tag or *sillybos*, which hung from a roll as it lay on the shelf [...]; (ii) a title standing at the head of the work within the roll [...]; (iii) the *subscriptio*, that is, a title standing at the end of the work (for which we use the term colophon) [...] (iv) there are examples on papyri of titles written on the verso of the roll along the outside edge.[76]

The word *titulus* or *indices* was the Latin word for the title-tags attached to finished book rolls, in which texts were written.[77] Referring to the period after Cicero and before Suetonius, Horsfall notes that 'Roman books did generally have titles, and that those titles were often demonstrably the author's own and not those later supplied by booksellers, librarians or purchasers'.[78] Statius, crucially, left no doubt as to the title of his Theban epic, writing at the end of the poem,

> Durabisne procul dominoque legere superstes,
> o mihi bissenos multum vigilata per annos
> Thebai? (*Thebaid*, XII.810–12)
>
> My Thebaid, on whom I have spent twelve wakeful years, will you long endure and be read when your master is gone?

Although Statius's *Silvae* were not known in the Middle Ages, the title of the *Thebaid* was briefly mentioned by the poet in a lyric ode to his friend Vibius Maximus:

> quippe te fido monitore nostra
> Thebais multa cruciata lima

[76] Nicholas Horsfall, 'Some Problems of Titulature in Roman Literary History', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 28 (1981), 103–114 (p. 103).
[77] See Rex Winsbury, *The Roman Book: Books Publishing and Performance in Classical Rome* (London: Duckworth, 2009), p. 17 and p. 30.
[78] Horsfall, p. 103.

> temptat audaci fide Mantuanae
> gaudia famae. (*Silvae,* IV.7.25–28)
>
> For 'tis with you as my trusty counselor that my *Thebaid*, tortured by much filing, essays with daring string the joys of Mantuan fame.

During the medieval period, *tituli* came to refer to the inscriptions that authors and scribes often used at the beginning of their texts, or in colophons at the end, to assist with the reader's orientation of a work.[79] Richard Sharpe notes that '*Tituli* may include information on the author, real or suppositious, the title or some description of the work that stands in for a title.'[80] As Statius provided the title of his epic so clearly, it is perhaps unsurprising that it is well attested in the *tituli* of medieval manuscripts of the text.[81]

In contrast to Statius's *Thebaid*, there is no clear evidence to support the title *Togail na Tebe* for the Middle Irish translation. Before discussing whence Calder might have developed his title for the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, I demonstrate that other major adaptations of classical epic in medieval Ireland can be shown to have titles associated with them by medieval Irish authors and scribes.

The earliest manuscript version of *Togail Troí* is found in TCD 1339.[82] The manuscript is also known as *Lebor Laignech* ('The Book of Leinster') or *Lebor na Nuachongbála* ('The Book of Nuachongbáil) and dates to the late twelfth century. In this version of *Togail Troí*, the title rubric is clearly given at the top of the column, where the narrative begins (**Fig. 1**). In TCD 1298, *In Cath Catharda* is introduced by the heading 'Do Chogadh Siuialta na Romhanach, dia ngoireid Gaoidheil in Cath Cathardha' ('Of the Civil War of the Romans, which the Gaels call the Cath Catharda'), which indicates the tale's title in the vernacular.[83] In Calder's edition of *Imtheachta Aeniasa* ('The Adventures of Aeneas') adapted from Virgil's *Aeneid*, he takes the title from a colophon at the end of the text (**Fig. 2**) which states: 'Conidh iad imtheachta Aeniasa meic Anaichis conaigi sin' ('So that these are the wanderings of Aeneas, son of Anchises, as above') (*Imtheachta Aeniasa,* 3215–16).[84]

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[79] Richard Sharpe, *Titulus: Identifying Medieval Latin Texts, An Evidence-Based Approach* (Turnout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 30–31.
[80] Sharpe, p. 30.
[81] For instance, the earliest known text of the *Thebaid*, in the ninth-century manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Latin 8051, begins and ends '*inc.* Statii Poetae Liber Thebaid. Primus Incipit. Fraternas... *exp.* honores. Statii Poetae Thebaidorum Libri XII Expliciunt' (fol. 1^{r} and fols. 58^{v}–59^{r}).
[82] TCD 1339, pp. 217a–244b, 397a–408b.
[83] '*In Cath Catharda: The Civil War of the Romans*', ed. and trans. by Whitley Stokes, in *Irische Texte: mit Übersetzungen und Worterbuch*, ed. by Ernst Windisch and Whitley Stokes, 4 vols (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1880–1909), IV.2 (1909), p. 2.
[84] Line numbers follow Calder, *Imtheachta Aeniasa*.

Fig. 1 Rubric for *Togail Troi*, from Robert Atkinson, ed., *The Book of Leinster: sometimes called the Book of Glendalough, a collection of pieces, prose and verse, in the Irish language, compiled in part, about the middle of the twelfth century: now for the first time published from the original manuscript in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, Facsimile* (Dublin: RIA, 1880), p. 217a.

Fig. 2 *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, Book of Ballymote, MS 23 P 12, fol. 267^{r}
By permission of the Royal Irish Academy © RIA.

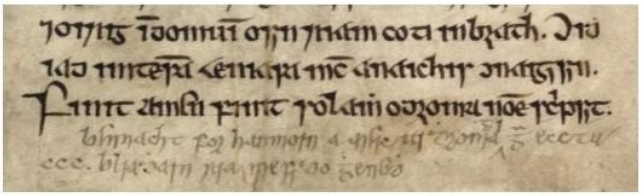
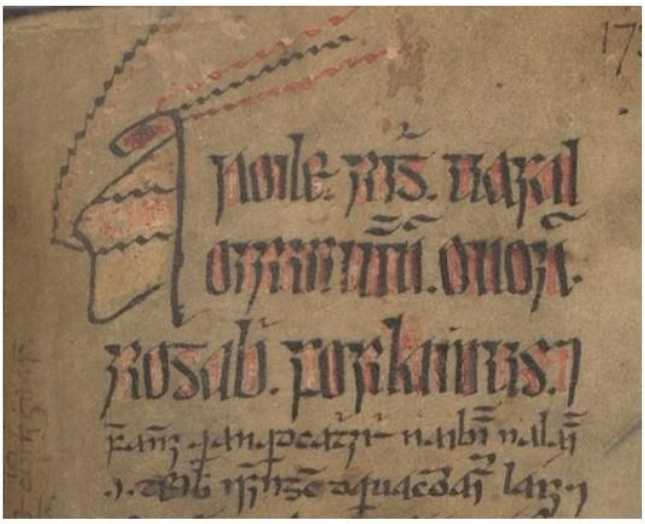


Fig. 3 Beginning of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* text at fol. 87^{r} a1-5
© British Library Board, Egerton 1781



The first page of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* in Edinburgh, NLS, Adv.MS.72.1.8 (*olim* Gaelic MSS. 8, Kilbride Collection, 4), fol. 1^{r} is sadly illegible, so, if it originally included a title, it is no longer accessible.[85] There is no title rubric for the Middle Irish *Thebaid* at the beginning of the text in Egerton 1781, fol. 87^{r} where the first page can be seen clearly (**Fig. 3**). There is also no mention of a title to the text in the scribal note left by Diarmaid Bacach Mac Parrthaláin, the scribe of the Egerton 1781 text (fol. 128^{r}).[86] A sixteenth-century list of contents at the end of Egerton 1781 (fol. 154$^{r–v}$) might have given a title for the narrative from the date of the manuscript's compilation, but sadly the text is illegible on the recto and thus any indication of the title there is lost.[87] Therefore, there is no title for the Middle Irish *Thebaid* in the manuscripts which convey the text.

1.3 Evidence from catalogue entries

Further evidence that the title *Togail na Tebe* was Calder's invention can be found in the conspicuous absence of a title for the Middle Irish *Thebaid* in the catalogue entries for the manuscripts containing it. In the first published catalogues to the manuscripts in Edinburgh, London, and Dublin, no Irish title was ascribed to this narrative.

Donald Mackinnon's 1912 catalogue of Gaelic manuscripts in the Advocate's Library, Edinburgh (now part of the NLS) provides a section on 'Gaelic Versions of Classical Epics'.[88] Under this heading, Mackinnon observes that in the Library, 'Our MSS. contain copies, more or less complete, of the *Thebaid* of Statius, the *Togail Troí*, and the *Pharsalia* of Lucan'.[89] Within his description of MS. VIII (Adv.MS.72.1.8) he again refers to the Middle Irish translation of Statius's epic as '[A] copy of the *Thebaid* of Statius'.[90] Mackinnon's own incomplete edition and translation of the narrative the title of the text is always titled 'The Gaelic Version of the *Thebaid* of Statius'.[91] In Edward J. Gwyn's supplement to the 1921 edition of the *Catalogue of the Irish Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin*, he

[85] Ronald Black, 'Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland' (unpublished catalogue, 2011), *ISOS*, <www.isos.dias.ie> [accessed 06/02/2015], NLS, Adv.MS.72.1.8.
[86] See **Chapter 2:5**.
[87] *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum*, ed. by Standish Hayes O'Grady, Robin Flower, and Myles Dillon, 3 vols (London: British Museum, 1926–53), [hereafter, *BL Cat.*], II (1926), p. 544.
[88] Donald Mackinnon, *The Descriptive Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts in the Advocate's Library, Edinburgh, and Elsewhere in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Brown, 1912), pp. 194–202.
[89] Mackinnon, *The Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 195.
[90] Mackinnon, *The Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 195.
[91] Mackinnon, 'The Gaelic Version of the *Thebaid* of Statius'.

refers the reader to Mackinnon's version of the text and lists the two fragments of the text in TCD 1298 as, '[A] fragment of the Irish version of the *Thebaid*'.[92]

It is only in Robin Flower's *BL Cat.*, which was published four years after Calder's edition, that there is any mention of *Togail na Tebe,* and here it is in refers only to the edition. Flower's principal description of the text in the Egerton 1781 manuscript is as a 'translation in prose of the *Thebaid* of Publius Papinius Statius'.[93] Later in the catalogue description he explains, 'The text has been edited from this MS. and Adv. Libr. MS. VIII, f. 1 [...] by G. Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, 1922.'[94] For the purposes of the current study, it is regrettable that Flower's reference to Calder's edited text gives no indication of what he thought of the title *Togail na Tebe*.

1.4 Naming the Middle Irish *Thebaid:* the phrase *togail na Tebe* and its variations in the narrative

It is therefore possible to say with certainty that Calder's edition was the first known instance in which the Irish vernacular version of the *Thebaid* was given the title *Togail na Tebe*. Even though Calder himself did not use this title to describe the narrative in his 'Introduction' to the text, the fact remains that his edition bore this title, so where might it have come from?[95] He may have been inspired by the title of the classical epic adaptation *Togail Troí* and the apparent association of this narrative with a pre-existing genre in medieval Irish literature. The presence of this title alongside the category of tale, *togla* in the Middle Irish Tale-List B may support this theory.[96] Calder may have been aware of these tale types through Rudolf Thurneysen's research on these lists published under 'Die Sagenlisten' in *Die Irische Helden und Königsage* in 1921.[97]

Variations on the phrase *togail na Tebe* do occur throughout the Middle Irish *Thebaid*.[98] To date, I have found only one occasion where it directly translates Statius's

[92] Thomas K. Abbott and Edward J. Gwyn, *Catalogue of the Irish Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin* (Dublin: Hodges and Figgis, 1921), p. 337.
[93] Flower, *BL Cat.*, II (1926), p. 537.
[94] Flower, *BL Cat.*, II (1926), p. 538.
[95] Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, pp. vii–xxiii.
[96] Mac Cana, pp. 67–68.
[97] Rudolf Thurneysen, *Die Irische Helden und Königsage bis zum siebzehnten Jharhundert* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1921), pp. 21–24.
[98] *TnT*, 1139 (cf. *Thebaid*, III.385–86); *TnT*, 1265 (cf. *Thebaid*, III.575–77); *TnT*, 1449 (cf. *Thebaid*, IV.126–27); *TnT*, 1499 (cf. *Thebaid*, IV.187–88); *TnT*, 1510 (cf. *Thebaid*, IV.211–13); *TnT*, 1537 (cf. *Thebaid*, IV.246–48); *TnT*, 1542 (cf. *Thebaid*, IV.251–52); *TnT*, 1705 (cf. *Thebaid*, IV.637–39); *TnT*, 1716 (cf. *Thebaid*, IV.648–49); *TnT*, 1770 (cf. *Thebaid*, IV.760–62); *TnT*, 2144 (cf. *Thebaid*, V.681–82); *TnT*, 2627 (cf. *Thebaid*, VII.216–19); *TnT*, 2729 (cf. *Thebaid*, VII.433–34); *TnT*, 2955 (cf.

wording. This appears as part of Adrastus's introduction to Hypsipyle in *Thebaid* Book III, when the Argive army ask for her assistance to find water in the drought (IV.753–71). Adrastus explains to her why the Argive army is on the march, but that now they suffer from the effects of harsh thirst:

'nos ferro meritas exscindere Thebas | mens tulit, imbelli sed nunc sitis aspera fato | summittitque animos et inertia robora carpit.' (*Thebaid*, IV.760–62)	'Et [a]tamait ac tocht do thogail Tebi, 7 ni cath marbas [s]ind acht mad oenerti ittad.' (*TnT*, 1770–71)
'Our purpose was to raze guilty Thebes with the sword, but now harsh thirst humbles our courage in a fate unwarlike, eats away our idle strength.'	'And we are going to sack Thebes, and it is not war that kills us only weakness from thirst.'

Here *exscindere* ('to destroy') from the epic is translated into the Irish using *togail*, indicating the army's intention to cause the destruction of the city. This is reminiscent of the translation of the title of pseudo-Dares' *De Excidio Troiae Historia* into *Togail Troí*, where *togail* is directly translated from *excidium* ('destruction').[99]

Most instances of the phrase *togail na Tebe* in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, however, have a more complex relationship to the original text. For example, in *Thebaid* Book VII, Statius uses the verb *exscindere* at the start of Bacchus's complaint to Jupiter. In this instance, the use of *togail* in the Irish text reflects more closely the meaning of Statius's words, rather than a close translation of them:

'exscindisne tuas, divum sator optime, Thebas? | saeva adeo coniunx? nec te telluris amatae | deceptique laris miseret cinerumque meorum?' (*Thebaid*, VII.155–57)	'Is olc a ndenaid,' ar se, 'a Ioib comorad catha i cend na Tiauanda 7 a tir do thogail forru.'[100] (*TnT*, 2617–19)
'Most excellent begetter of the gods, are you razing your Thebes? Is your lady so cruel? Have you no pity for the beloved land, the hearth you tricked, my ashes?'	'It is wrong you do,' said he, 'O Jupiter, in waging war against the Thebans and destroying their land.'

In the Middle Irish narrative in this example, Bacchus's question to Jupiter 'exscindisne tuas [...] Thebas?' ('Are you razing your Thebes?') has become a statement explaining to Jupiter that he is wrong in promoting war against the Thebans. The reference to the destruction of the

Thebaid, VIII.104–07); *TnT*, 3179 (cf. *Thebaid*, VIII.815); *TnT*, 3690 (cf. *Thebaid*, IX.570–74); *TnT*, 4062 (cf. *Thebaid*, X.483–85); and *TnT*, 4823 (cf. *Thebaid*, XII.662–64).

[99] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 97.

[100] Calder translates 'upon them'; I omit for English syntax.

Thebans' land (*TnT*, 2619) reflects the meaning behind Bacchus's accusatory words to Jupiter at *Thebaid*, VII.156–57, asking if he has no pity for the beloved land (*tellus amatum, Thebaid*, VII.156).

Rather than being a translation of a set phrase in the *Thebaid*, the use of *togail na Tebe* in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* reflects the process of interpretation of Statius's imagery, relating to the act of going to, or being at, war. It does not appear to reflect the Irish narrative tale type *togail*. For example, at *TnT*, 1138–39, it is used to convey the Greeks' resolution, urged on by Tydeus, to sack Thebes:

Sic variis praetemptat pectora dictis | obliquatque preces. commotae questibus irae | et mixtus lacrimis caluit dolor. omnibus ultro | non iuvenum modo, sed gelidis et inertibus aevo | pectoribus mens una subit, viduare penates, | finitimas adhibere manus, iamque ire. (*Thebaid*, III.382–86)	Et o dorigni-sium an comairli sin co coitchend re cach, roerig truaignemela[101] toirssi 7 tindusa[102] a crideadaib na nGreg uili, co na roibi d' óg na do shin[4] andsin an aenduine nar-chind aenmenmain a aít 7 atharda d' [fh]agbail, 7 dul d'indsaigid na Teibe da togail re Polinices, mac Eidip. (*TnT*, 1135–39)
Thus with various speech he tests their hearts and slants entreaty. His plaints stir anger and indignation grows warm, mingled with tears. One thought comes unbidden to all hearts, not young men's only but to the chill and sluggish with age: to leave their homes bereft, summon neighbouring force, and on the instant march.	And when he had given that counsel generally to all, a lament of sorrow and pain arose from the hearts of all the Greeks, so that there was not there of young or old one person but made the same resolution, to leave his place and fatherland, and go to Thebes in order to sack it with Polynices, son of Oedipus.

In the Irish translation, young and old men alike determine to leave Argos in order to sack Thebes with Polynices. This contrasts with Statius's depiction of the men whose intentions are to leave their homes and start the march (*iam ire, Thebaid*, III.386). While the sack of Thebes may be implied in Statius's imagery, it is not stated. The Irish translation gives more clarity to the intention of the Greeks, explaining that the men's destination is Thebes, their purpose is to sack this city, and that they go with Polynices.

A similar approach can be seen in the Middle Irish interpretation of *Thebaid*, X.483–85 where Capaneus urges on the attacking army at the walls of Thebes:

'satis occultata, Pelasgi, | delituit virtus: nunc, nunc mihi vincere pulchrum | teste die; mecum clamore et pulvere aperto | ite palam,	'Eirgid, a oga,' ar se, 'maraen riumsa, uair as fada atú can mo bladh 7 can mo mornert do thogbail ag togail na Teibi. Uair is í mo

[101] Calder translates 'a woeful pang', I change to 'a lament', *eDIL* s.v. *trúag*, comp. + *neimél*, *—a*, *—e* act of sorrowing, lamenting.
[102] Calder translates 'sickness', I change to 'pain', as a better fit in the context, *eDIL* s.v. *tinnes*, *teinnes*.

iuvenes: sunt et mihi provida dextrae | omnia et horrendi stricto mucrone furores.' (*Thebaid*, X.482–86)	deslam daithgel[103] daingean is dee damsa, 7 is é mo chlaidem cruaid curata as cumachtach dam.' (*TnT*, 4060–64)
'Long enough, Pelasgians, has your valour hidden under cover. Now, now is victory glorious to me, with the day to witness. Come with me, men, for all to see, with shouts and dust in the open. I too have prescient omens in my right hand, my drawn sword makes my frenzies terrible.'	'Arise, O youths,' said he, 'along with me, for I am long in raising my renown and my great power by the sack of Thebes. For my white-skinned strong right hand is my god, and it is my hard heroic sword that is mighty for me.'

In Statius's epic, the idea of victory over Thebes is present in the use of *vincere* ('to conquer'). The focus here is on Capaneus's active involvement in triumphing over the city; however, Statius leaves it up to the reader to understand that the hero's perceived victory is the capture of Thebes. The sack of the city is depicted in the abstract imagery of the *clamor* ('shout') and *pulvis* ('dust') only. In contrast, the Irish translator makes Capaneus's words more explicit so that the warrior explains directly that his *blad* ('reknown') will be established by the sack of Thebes ('ag togail na Teibi', *TnT*, 4062).

Early evidence of medieval Irish scholars translating an abstruse Latin description of the destruction of a city in a phrase like *togail na Tebe* can be found in the ninth-century Irish glosses on Priscian's *Institutio de arte grammatica*.[104] In one example, where a line from the *Aeneid* was quoted by Priscan to make a grammatical point, the phrase *togail Troí* ('the destruction of Troy') was used as part of the following elucidation:

> 'Venit summa dies et ineluctabile tempus Dardaniae.'
> (*Aeneid*, II.324–25)
> (Irish gloss) panthus dixit contra aeneam tanicc aimser derb togle troi desm recht insin araimsir deirb in feminino.[105]
>
> 'The ultimate day came and the inescapable hour of Dardania'
> Panthus said to Aeneas 'The certain hour of the destruction of Troy has come'; that is, an example of certain time in the feminine.

The Irish description *togail Troí* not only explains that Panthus means to tell Aeneas that the hour of the city's destruction has come, but also ensures that the use of 'Dardania' for the city of Troy is understood. Brian Ó Cuív notes that the use of the phrase *togail Troí* is particularly interesting here given the use of the title *Togail Troí* for pseudo-Dares' *De Excidio Troiae*

[103] Calder translates 'white-hue', I change to 'white-skinned', *eDIL* s.v. 2 *dath-*, *daith-*, *gel*.
[104] See *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus: a collection of old-Irish glosses, scholia, prose, and verse*, ed. and trans. by Whitley Stokes and John Strachan, 2 vols (Cambridge: CUP, 1901–03), II (1903), p. 121.
[105] Text and translation from Brian Ó Cuív, 'Medieval Irish Scholars and Classical Latin Literature', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 81C (1981), 239–48 (p. 243).

Historia.[106] The use of this interpretative technique in the early medieval Irish gloss on Priscan and the regularity with which it is used in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* may suggest that using *togail* to interpret more abstract descriptions of destruction from classical texts became quite standardised in medieval Ireland.[107] At the very least, it is evident that it was a technique which the Irish translator of the *Thebaid* was familiar with.

Throughout the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, the Irish author used the phrase *togail na Tebe* as an interpretative tool to clarify the meaning of Statius' sometimes obscure references for his readers. While the evidence for the title of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* to be *Togail na Tebe* is lacking, the appearance of the phrase throughout the text and its association with the title *Togail Troí* does help explain why Calder chose to use it for his edition. Given that these associations can be made by modern readers, it seems possible that the phrase invoked associations with *Togail Troí* and with *togla* in their native literature for the tale's medieval Irish readers. However, Calder's use of the title *Togail na Tebe* appears to have created the impression of a firm connection between the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and the *togla* in medieval Irish literature. In the following two sections, I discuss how this association has helped form and inform the approach taken by modern scholars to the Middle Irish *Thebaid*.

1.5 Developing connections: the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and *togla*

Although the reviewers of the 1922 edition appear to have avoided embracing Calder's *titulus*, by the early 1960s, when Meyer's article 'The Middle-Irish Version of the *Thebaid*' was published, he clearly considered *Togail na Tebe* to be the title of the tale rather than the title of an edition.[108] Under the illusion that this was the tale's title, Meyer consequently referred to Mackinnon's unfinished 'edition of the *Togail na Tebe*'.[109] He also confidently provided an analysis of the narrative linking it to the genre of *togla* in medieval Irish literature:

> [T]he subject matter of the *Thebaid* could be readily fitted into the native Irish catalogue of story. Native tradition had classified stories by types, and we have two old lists of sagas where these types are enumerated:
>
> > Destructions, Cattle-raids, Courtships, Battles, Cave-stories, Voyages, Tragedies, Adventures, Banquets, Sieges, Plunderings, etc.

[106] Ó Cuív, p. 243. See also Helen Fulton, 'History and Historia: Uses of the Troy Story in Medieval Ireland and Wales', in, *Classical Literature and Learning*, ed. by O'Connor, pp. 40–57 (p. 43).
[107] A full investigation is beyond the scope of this study.
[108] Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish Version of the *Thebaid'*, 687–99. See also Fraser, 'Statius in Irish', 186–87; Gwyn, 435–39; and Bergin, 320–22.
[109] Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish Version of the *Thebaid*', p. 689. See also Meyer, 'The T.C.D. fragments of the *Togail na Tebe*', 120–32.

> In this native framework of tales, then, there was room for the *Togail na Tebe*, the Siege of Thebes as it is called. Native sagas such as the *Togail Bruidne da Derga*, The Storming of Derga's Hostel, are representative of this literary genre, and the story of Troy is likewise the *Togail Troí*.[110]

Meyer's study fails to appreciate that the title *Togail na Tebe* was a twentieth-century construction and his direct association of the tale title with equivalents in native saga literature, such as *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*, has helped form lasting connections with the *togla* genre.[111]

1.6 The Importance of tale titles: *Togail Larisa* and *Togail na Tebe*

The 'two old lists of sagas', mentioned by Meyer, are the medieval Irish Tale-Lists A and B. Three classical tales in Irish are attested in Tale-List B: *Scéla Alexandair*, *Togail Troí*, and *Togail Larisa*. The inclusion of *Togail Troí* may date List B to either the eleventh or twelfth century.[112] There is no known text which corresponds to the title *Togail Larisa*. The name Larisa, however, may indicate that this lost narrative related the destruction of one of two ancient Greek cities, either Argos, the city at war with Thebes in Statius's *Thebaid*, or the chief city of Thessaly. The reasons for these possible associations will be discussed below.

The association with Argos has sometimes led scholars to presume that *Togail Larisa* was another name for the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. In discussing the dating of Tale-List B, Mac Cana observes,

> Another title, *Togail Larisa*, has not been identified, though the city of Larisa features in *Togail na Tebe*, the Irish version of the *Thebaid*, which was probably written in the twelfth century. On the other hand, it might be significant that *Togail na Tebe* itself is not included in B.[113]

The absence of *Togail na Tebe* as a title on Tale-List B should not, however, lead to the presumption that *Togail Larisa* was the original title for the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. Mac Cana's brief reference to the city of Larisa in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* appears to have encouraged this association. Myrick suggests that *Togail Larisa* was 'possibly an alternate title for the

[110] Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish Version of the *Thebaid*', p. 689. Meyer's list of saga types was developed from Thurneysen, pp. 21–24. Meyer's translation of *togail* as 'siege' should be taken as a mistranslation. On the tale-lists, the title *forbais* or *forfess* is used for siege tales. See Mac Cana, p. 76.
[111] See Stanford, 'Towards a History of Classical Influences in Ireland', p. 37; Ní Shéaghdha, p. 108; Myrick, pp. 69–73; Ralph O'Connor, *The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel: Kingship and Narrative Artistry in a Mediaeval Irish Saga* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), p. 238; and Edwards, 'Medieval Statius', pp. 501–02.
[112] Mac Cana, p. 84.
[113] Mac Cana, p. 84.

Togail na Tebe', and O'Connor writes that *Togail Larisa* 'was an earlier version of *Togail na Tebe*'.[114] It seems prudent to adopt a measure of caution before this presumption becomes further ingrained in ideas surrounding the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and its title. To begin with, what evidence is there to link *Togail Larisa* with the Irish *Thebaid*?

Larisa is another name for Argos and both Larisa and Argos are used in Statius's poem and the Irish translation. There are thirty references to the place name Argos in the *Thebaid* of which only five were translated into the Irish vernacular text.[115] Four of these omitted references occur within lacunae in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*'s manuscript tradition.[116] The treatment of the other references varies, but the majority were removed as the Irish author abbreviated or omitted passages from the *Thebaid*.[117] On occasion, references to Argos were transformed by the translator into references to *na Greic* ('the Greeks').[118] For instance, early on in the *Thebaid*, Jupiter decrees that both the cities of Argos and Thebes are to be destroyed. In the Irish narrative, Jupiter's decree was reported in both an abbreviated form and in indirect speech. His reference to the city of Argos became a reference to the Greeks.

'nunc geminas punire domos, quis sanguinis auctor | ipse ego, descendo. Perseos alter in Argos | scinditur, Aonias fluit hic ab origine Thebas.' (*Thebaid*, I.224–26)	Is i sin oes 7 fuair 7 aimsear doroindi Ioib, mac sona saidbir Satuirn, conni 7 comairli risna haireachtaib dimoraib diadaib, ca digail daberad arna Tiauandaib 7 arna Grecaib isna olcaib doronsad. (*TnT*, 575–78)
'Now I descend to punish two houses, my own blood. One stream branches to Persean Argos, the other flows from its fount to Aonian Thebes.'	That is the time and hour and period that Jupiter, Saturn's happy rich son, held a meeting and counsel with the vast assemblies of gods as to what vengeance he should inflict on the Thebans and on the Greeks for the evils they had done.

Later in the *Thebaid*, Jupiter does clarify that Thebes will not be destroyed by the war (VII.219–21). However, this is not the case in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, where Jupiter makes

[114] Myrick, p. 70 and O'Connor, *The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel*, p. 238, n. 42.
[115] Argos is used at *TnT*, 1006 (cf. *Thebaid*, II.621); *TnT*, 1102 (cf. *Thebaid*, III.337); *TnT*, 1282 (cf. *Thebaid*, III.592); *TnT*, 1316 (cf. *Thebaid*, III.631), and *TnT*, 4782 (cf. *Thebaid*, XII.549).
[116] *Thebaid*, II.743, III.14, III.208, and III.229.
[117] *Thebaid*, I.259 (cf. *TnT*, 578–79); *Thebaid*, I.286 (cf. *TnT*, 555); *Thebaid*, II.180 (cf. *TnT*, 672–73); *Thebaid*, II.213 (cf. *TnT*, 702); *Thebaid*, II.432 (cf. *TnT*, 833–37); *Thebaid*, VI.15; *Thebaid*, VI.347 (cf. *TnT*, 1592); *Thebaid*, VI.515; *Thebaid*, VII.175 (cf. *TnT*, 2617–22); *Thebaid*, VIII.472 (cf. *TnT*, 3145); *Thebaid*, VIII.736 (cf. *TnT*, 3310); *Thebaid*, IX.99 (cf. *TnT*, 3408–13); *Thebaid*, X.237 (cf. *TnT*, 3927–29); *Thebaid*, X.437 (cf. *TnT*, 4030–32); *Thebaid*, XI.211 (cf. *TnT*, 4354–56); *Thebaid*, XI.434 (cf. *TnT*, 4465–69); *Thebaid*, XI.731 (cf. *TnT*, 4601–05); *Thebaid*, XII.334 (cf. *TnT*, 4705–07).
[118] For example, *Thebaid*, I.225 (cf. *TnT*, 575–78); *Thebaid*, X.892 (cf. *TnT*, 4253); and *Thebaid*, VI.672 (cf. *TnT*, 1735).

it clear that Thebes will be destroyed (*TnT*, 2624–29).[119] Thus, it seems unlikely that medieval Irish scholars would have named the Theban narrative *Togail Larisa*.

As for Larisa, Statius refers directly to the city by this name on four occasions in the *Thebaid*.[120] In contrast, there are eight references to the city of Larisa in the Irish narrative, only two of which reflect a direct translation of the name from Statius's *Thebaid*.[121] In the Irish vernacular, Larisa is used five times to clarify an indirect reference to the city.[122] For example, at *Thebaid*, I.403–04, Statius describes Tydeus treading *eadem lustra* ('the same wilds') that Polynices did in his approach to the city of Argos. The Irish translator changed the reference to Tydeus traversing the wilderness, explaining instead that he was approaching Larisa, 'Et darala e isinn aidchi gairb gemreta cetna d' indsaigid na cathrach Larissa' ('And he happened on the same rough wintry night to approach the city of Larissa') (*TnT*, 365–67). Like the use of the phrase *togail na Tebe* discussed above, the use of this proper noun may reflect translation or compilation techniques that were used to keep track of the action. It is not necessarily indicative of a title.

As can be seen at *TnT*, 575–78 Statius's references to Argos were not only developed in association with the name Larisa, the Argives are also referred to as the Greeks throughout the narrative. In making this distinction, the Irish translator appears to have set out to define the Argives as Greeks and the Thebans as non-Greek; a technique which is discussed in detail with close readings at **Chapter 5:3.5**.

If the narrative *Togail Larisa* was associated with the destruction of Argos, then it seems somewhat strange that the king of the city, Adrastus, is not more often referenced as the king of Larisa in the surviving Middle Irish Theban narratives. In the *Riss*, Adrastus is referred to as the king of *Gréc Bec* ('Little Greece') not the king of Larisa or Argos.[123] For example, when the reader is introduced to Amphiaraus, he is described as follows: 'is é dono int Aimpiair sin do-nidh faistine 7 célmuine do Adruist do righ na Greci Begi' ('It was Amphiaraus, moreover, who used to prophesy and augur for Adrastus, king of Little Greece') (*Riss*, ll. 41–42). In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, after leaving Thebes, Polynices traverses through a storm until he eventually sees a light, which is described as coming from a tower 'isin chathraig dianaid comainm Larisa annsa Greic bic' ('in the city named Larissa, in little

[119] Jupiter's decree and reprieve are further discussed at **Chapter 5:2.2**.
[120] *Thebaid*, I. 382, II. 251–53, IV. 44, VI. 515–17.
[121] *TnT*, 315–17 (cf. *Thebaid*, I.382); *TnT*, 1382–83 (cf. *Thebaid*, IV.44). See Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', p. 96.
[122] *TnT*, 320–21 (cf. *Thebaid*, I.387–89); *TnT*, 330–31 (cf. *Thebaid*, I.390); *TnT*, 365–67 (cf. *Thebaid*, I.404); *TnT*, 543–45 (cf. *Thebaid*, I.627); and *TnT*, 687–88 (cf. *Thebaid*, II.201). The use of Larisa at *TnT*, 4909 is part of an addition in the Irish translation which has no comparative text in the *Thebaid*.
[123] See *Riss*, ll. 20, 42, 77–78, 99. Miles observes that the reference is to the region which Adrastus rules over, rather than the city itself, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', p. 96.

Greece') (*TnT*, 316–17).[124] As the *Riss* is believed to be late twelfth to thirteenth century in origin, it seems plausible that the name *Gréc Bec* was drawn directly from the Middle Irish *Thebaid*.[125] This is further supported by the inclusion of a reference to Adrastus as 'ri na Greci Bicci' ('king of Little Greece') in the third recension of *Togail Troí*, a text which Miles demonstrates borrowed heavily from the Middle Irish *Thebaid*.[126]

Argos was not the only ancient Greek city named Larisa known in medieval Ireland. It is also named as the principal city of the Thessalians in the Irish version of Statius's *Achilleid*, *Geinimain Aichil 7 a Macgnima* ('The birth of Achilles and his Boyhood Deeds').[127] In providing a short account of Peleus and Thetis, Achilles' father and mother, the reader is informed:

> Pelius dano iar tabairt dó na mna-sin ro ghab Tracia, 7 do-chuaidh i Tesaltaib 7 go rab primcatraigh na Tesalta .i. Larisa.[128]
>
> After Peleus then had taken that wife he captured Thrace, and he went into Thessaly and captured the principal city of the Thessalians, i.e. Larissa.

That the city is named here raises the possibility of another city being the focus of the tale given as *Togail Larisa* on Tale-List B. Therefore, the evidence for *Togail Larisa* to have been an earlier version of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* is not conclusive and cannot be used as evidence for this speculative association between the tales.

1.7 Connecting medieval Irish *togail* tales and classical epic adaptations

Having discussed the difficulties of linking the Middle Irish *Thebaid* with *Togail Larisa*, in this section I consider whether or not connections can be made between native *togla* given in the Tale-Lists and adaptations and translations of classical epic in the Irish vernacular. Should modern scholars view these classical narratives as connected to the genre?

Miles discusses the difficulties of attempting to understand the genre of classical epic in medieval Ireland through the Tale-Lists, and notes that both titles for *Scéla Alexandair* and *Togail Troí* appear to reflect translations of the titles from their original Latin sources and not Irish narrative genre types.[129] He observes that in *Togail Troí*, 'The *togail* of the title [...]

[124] The reference to *Gréc Bec* here has no basis in the *Thebaid*, cf. I.381–82.
[125] Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', pp. 81–82.
[126] Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', pp. 78–79.
[127] Ó hAodha, p. 94 (§5) and p. 124 (§42).
[128] Ó hAodha, p. 94 (§5).
[129] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, pp. 96–97.

derives directly from the *excidium*, 'destruction', in the title of the primary Latin source, Dares Phrygius's *De Excidio Troiae Historia*.'[130] These titles, then, are not necessarily representative of the literary Irish genre of *togla*. Miles highlights that these classical epics are thus an 'ill-fit' for the native literature they are linked with.[131] Drawing on the texts *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga* ('The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel') and *Togail Bruidne Da Choca* ('The Destruction of Da Coca's hostel'), Myrick tentatively suggests that the constituent elements of a *togail* may be, 'The fiery destruction of a *bruiden* as the result of the king's breaking of certain royal taboos called *geasa* appears to be a central theme.'[132] She observes that these traits which are associated with the *togla* cannot be convincingly linked to a narrative type which includes either *Togail Troí* or *Togail na Tebe*.[133]

Myrick also draws attention to the knotty question of the stability of tale titles within both the tale-lists and in the wider sphere of medieval Irish literature. She reflects that:

> A number of tales common to both lists are categorized and labelled differently, for instance the *Fled Bricenn* in A is rendered the *Feis Tige Bricenn* in B. The canonical titles by which some tales are now known to us do not occur in A and B; for instance, the *Scéla Mucce Meic Datho* appears in both as the *Orgain Mac Datho*. In general there seems to have been a certain amount of freedom in the categorization of tales under synonymous rubrics, for instance, between *Immrama* and *Echtra*, or *Cath*, *Orgain*, and *Togail*.[134]

For Myrick, the category *orgun* ('murder/slaying' or 'ravaging/plundering') would better suit *Togail Troí*, while *forbais* ('siege') would be a more suitable fit for *Togail na Tebe*.[135]

Building on Miles's discussion of classicizing epic *amplificatio* in *Togail Troí* and *Táin Bo Cúailnge*, O'Connor offers speculation on whether or not the specific *ecphrastic* qualities, particularly 'watchman devices', of Irish native *tána* ('cattle raids') and *togla* narratives, might suggest that these tale types were conceived or received as a form of 'epic' themselves, thus resulting in both *Togail Troí* and *Togail na Tebe* being given these titles, rather than *orgun*.[136] However, both Myrick and O'Connor's discussions are tentative and reliant on the assumption that *Togail na Tebe* is the tale title for the Middle Irish *Thebaid*.

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[130] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 97.
[131] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 96.
[132] Myrick, p. 75.
[133] Myrick, pp. 76–77.
[134] Myrick, p. 75.
[135] Myrick, p. 77.
[136] O'Connor, *The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel*, pp. 236–389. See also Brent Miles, 'The Literary Set Piece and the *Imitatio* of Latin Epic in the *Cattle Raid of Cúailnge*', in *Ulidia 2*, ed. by Ó hUiginn and Ó Catháin, pp. 66–80.

Thus, taking the discussion above into account, it seems prudent to be cautious of making connections with the *togla* and the adaptations and translations of classical epic based solely upon the tale titles. Tale titles within the Irish literary corpus appear variable, the translation of Latin to Irish wording in *Togail Troí* might not link directly to genre, and the evidence is lacking to say that the Middle Irish *Thebaid* was perceived as a *togail* tale with any certainty.

Information contained in the colophon at the end of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* suggests that the translator himself was not entirely sure which genre to associate the narrative with:

> Airim thrá ar-marbad andsin do rigaib 7 da daescursluagh diairmigthi. Ní chuimnigid[137] na sgribenda 7 scela discrirthecha deiligthi ar-fagbad beó and. Ní sud con-sirther. Conad ní da ngnimaib 7 da scelaib 7 da n-imteachtaib conuigi sin. Sella. Sella. Sella. (*TnT*, 4919–23)
>
> However, the number that was slain there of kings and common people is past reckoning. The writings and wild and varied tales do not record those that were left alive there. Here it is not attempted. So that is something of their deeds, tales and adventures up to there. Selah! Selah! Selah!

The medieval author explains that this is a collection of *gnímai* ('deeds'), *scéla* ('tales'), and *imtheachta* ('adventures' or 'journeyings'). The translator's own view of this literary canon is perhaps expressed in the description of this type of tale as *discrirthecha* ('wild') and *deiligthi* ('varied' or 'distinguished'). The narrative is not, however, associated with *togla* in this colophon. It is perhaps worthwhile then, to sound a note of caution about using tale titles as either the definitive, or the only, guide to genre in medieval Irish literature.

1.8 What should modern scholars call the medieval Irish translation of the *Thebaid*?

The study above demonstrates that the title *Togail na Tebe* for the Middle Irish *Thebaid* was an editorial construction and highlights some of the complexities involved in associating the tale with *Togail Larisa* and the genre of *togla*. The question remains, however, what should modern scholars call the Middle Irish *Thebaid*?

While *Togail na Tebe* is not attested as a title for the narrative, there is one tantalizing possibility of a title for the text. The third recension of *Togail Troí* in RIA, D iv 2 contains the episode of Hypsipyle and Jason, which Miles demonstrates was a direct borrowing from the

[137] Calder translates 'commemorates', I change to 'record', *eDIL* s.v. 1 *cuimnigid(ir)*.

Middle Irish *Thebaid*.[138] At the close of this episode, a short outline of Oedipus and his family is given, in which the war between Polynices and Eteocles is described as the *Táin na Teibi* ('the Raid on Thebes'):[139]

> [I]s e in Polinic 7 a brathair Etiocleis tuc Tain na Teibi 7 a cara comaind 7 comgaiscidh .i. Tith mac Oinius, meic rig cuana na Cailidoini. (RIA, D iv 2, fol. 27^{r} a2–4)[140]
>
> [I]t was Polynices and his brother Eteocles who fought the Raid on Thebes, and his friend in affection and shared valour, Tydeus son of Oeneus, son of the noble king of Calydon.

Furthermore, Statius is acknowledged in the text following as the source for the episode:

> Conidh amlaidh sin indisis Sdait in fili socenelach do Franccaib cetimrum luingi Árgo le gasruduib glana Gréc co hinis leaburburccaigh Leimhin 7 ro fhaccaib Feirgil 7 Dariet Frigeta 7 Eitnir Gothach in scel sin ar iaraidh in croicind órda in reithi Frisicda i cinn sleibi uraird Isp*er* íarthair deisc*i*rt Afraicthi. (RIA, D iv 2, fol. 27ra 4–10).[141]
>
> Thus does Statius, the noble poet of the Franks, recount the first voyage of the Argo with bright companies of Greeks to the long-keeled isle of Lemnos; and Virgil and Dares Phrygius and resounding *Eitnir* [of the Goths?] omitted that tale of the golden fleece of the ram of Phrixus on the very high mountain of Hesperus in the south-west of Africa.

Like the episode of Hypsipyle and Jason, the citation of Statius as author of this episode was also taken from the Middle Irish *Thebaid*.[142] As the third recension of *Togail Troí* is later than the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, it is possible that the reference *Táin na Teibi* here may have come from a known title for the narrative.[143] Such an association is, however, problematic. The reference *Táin na Teibi* appears to refer to the war at Thebes, rather than to a specific narrative which tells this story. Therefore, it cannot be demonstrated that *Tain na Teibi* was used as a tale title for the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. The reference, though, does imply that the author of the third recension of *Togail Troí* considered the war at Thebes to be a *táin* of some description and that he made this association based on his knowledge of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and with the clear understanding that this tale was attributed to Statius.

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[138] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 63.
[139] Miles demonstrated that the section relaying the history of Polynices and Eteocles in the third recension of *Togail Troí* has features in common with the *Riss*, and may be linked to an earlier commentary tradition, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', p. 79.
[140] Text and translation from Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', pp. 78–79.
[141] Text and translation from Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 63.
[142] See Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 63 and also **Chapter 3:3.2**.
[143] O'Connor, 'Irish narrative literature', p. 15.

Miles argues that, of all the classical texts adapted in medieval Ireland, it is Statius's *Thebaid* that 'affords by far the closest typological similarities with the *Táin*'.[144] He describes various affinities between the native Irish tale *Táin Bó Cúailnge* and the *Thebaid*. Firstly, he draws attention to the character Fergus, who leads the Ulster exiles in Medb's army in *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, and notes that in the twelfth century tale *Scéla Conchobair maic Nessa* he loses his kingdom after agreeing to allow his son-in-law, Conchobar, sovereignty for one year.[145] According to the tale, Conchobar makes himself so popular over the course of the year that at the end of it the Ulstermen decree that he should retain the kingship. Unlike Polynices' exile in the *Thebaid*, which is the direct result of Eteocles retaining the kingship at Thebes after his year in power has passed, Fergus's exile comes about later, as told in *Loinges Mac nUislenn* ('The exile of the sons of Uisliu'), and is not directly associated with Conchobar possessing sovereignty of Ulster. In *Loinges Mac nUislenn*, Fergus's exile comes about when he is betrayed by Conchobar and forced to seek refuge with Aillil and Medb in Connacht. Miles observes that:

> Considering the loose connection made between Fergus's loss of the throne and his subsequent exile, one cannot argue that the Irish sources are modeled on the *Thebaid* in any simple sense. Yet read in tandem, the *Táin* and the *Thebaid* do look like independent literary treatments of either the same tale-type, or independent depictions of an actual, and if so very rare, political arrangement.[146]

Miles goes on to provide further parallels between these narratives.[147]

The reference to *Tain na Teibi* in the third recension of *Togail Troí* gives some credibility to Miles's suggestion that medieval Irish readers of the *Táin* and the *Thebaid* may have viewed them as independent literary treatments of the same tale-type. His observation that the medieval Irish reader may have seen affinities in the political arrangements of the narratives is also supported by the fact that the translator of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* altered Statius's portrayal of the agreement to share sovereignty at Thebes so that it was decided by the Theban people. This may demonstrate that the Irish author saw an association between the two narratives (see **Chapter 5:2.1**). If the *Thebaid* was viewed as a *táin*, modern scholars are left with the intriguing possibility that the medieval Irish translation of it was subsequently viewed in this way too.

In the absence of a written title for a text in a medieval manuscript, Sharpe suggests that one approach to identifying that text would be to use the *incipit* (the first few words at the

[144] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 156.
[145] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 157.
[146] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 157.
[147] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 157.

beginning of the text) from the manuscript as the primary means of definition.[148] For the Middle Irish translation of Statius's *Thebaid*, this is unfortunately impractical. As highlighted above, the first page of Adv.MS.72.1.8 is illegible and the first two lines of the text which are legible in this manuscript (fol. 1^{v} a1–2) correspond to *TnT*, 80–82, '*co roighsit*[149] inna corpaib fen iar sin, 7 is do shil innd fhir sin rochinsead na rig tromglana Thiabanda uile' ('and then *they got back* into their own bodies, and it is from that man's seed came all the great and pure Theban kings') (*TnT*, 80–82). This section of text corresponds to passages that describe how Cadmus and his wife were turned into serpents and then back again after seven years (*TnT*, 76–81). It is also the end of the history of Cadmus in the text and the beginning of the history of Oedipus (*TnT*, 81–82). While it is useful to be aware of this when working with the manuscript or considering the textual context of the narrative, these words are neither a natural *incipit* for the text nor a clear identifier for what the text is.

In contrast to the material in Adv.MS.72.1.8, the Egerton 1781 text does include an *incipit* for the narrative, which Flower uses to identify the start of the text at fol. 87^{r}.[150] This begins:

> *Aroile righ uasal oirmuidnech onorach rogabh forlamhus 7 ferandus ar an ardcathraigh n-aibind n-alaind .i. Teibh isin nGreic dar-ua comainm Laius.* (*TnT*, 1–3)
>
> *A certain noble, revered, honourable king, had assumed sway and proprietorship over the pleasant and splendid capital city, that is, Thebes in Greece, whose name was Laius.*

Like the text from Adv.MS.72.1.8, this *incipit* does not provide a short textual introduction which is conducive to using as an identifier for the narrative.

1.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that the title *Togail na Tebe* was an editorial construction of the early twentieth century. Although the use of the interpretative phrase *togail na Tebe* may demonstrate that medieval Irish readers associated the tale with *Togail Troí*, our understanding of what medieval Irish authors and readers called this tale is incomplete. There is a lack of firm evidence to link it to tales listed as *togla* in the Tale-Lists. The material put forward in this study highlights that scholars cannot rely solely on tale titles when developing

[148] Sharpe, *Titulus*, pp. 45–59.
[149] The words in italics are found only in Egerton 1781.
[150] Flower, *BL Cat.*, II (1926), p. 537.

critical studies in this area. For now, I suggest that scholars adopt the Middle Irish *Thebaid* to reflect the Middle Irish translation of Statius's *Thebaid* as it describes what it is, without creating unsubstantiated associations.

Chapter Two

The Middle Irish *Thebaid*: The Texts in Context

2.1 Introduction

The text of the translation of Statius's *Thebaid* in Middle Irish has been preserved in two manuscripts. These are Adv.MS.72.1.8, fols. 1^{r}–27^{v} and Egerton 1781, fols. 87^{r}–128^{v}.[151] There are also two fragments at TCD 1298, pp. 457–58 and pp. 459–60.[152] In this chapter I aim to contextualise the texts in the manuscripts and fragments in which they can be found and consider how the text of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* is situated within them. I also explore whether scribal links to other manuscripts can reveal anything about the literary interests of the fourteenth and fifteenth century compilers and readers of the texts. What understanding, if any, can be gleaned of how these texts were viewed in the late medieval period when they were copied?

2.2 Edinburgh, NLS, Adv.MS.72.1.8

2.2.1 Manuscript and scribes

The most comprehensive description of this manuscript is given by Ronald Black in the 'Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland'.[153] The basics are given by Black as follows:

> 14–15th cent. Vellum. 37 ff. Folio. 32 x 22 cms. (ff.1–7, 9–27); 31 x 13.5 cms. (f. 8); 29 x 21 cms. (ff. 16–17); 33 x 21–2cms. (ff. 28–37). Basically two separate manuscripts.[154]

Black suggests that this compilation was primarily the work of five scribal hands: with marginalia attributed to eleven other hands.[155] The texts in the two manuscripts are listed by Black as: fol. 1^{r} a1, 'Togail Tebe' ('The Destruction of Thebes', the Irish *Thebaid*); fol. 28^{r}

[151] Calder used both the Adv.MS.72.1.8 and Egerton 1781 text for his edition.
[152] Meyer, 'The T.C.D. fragments', 121–32.
[153] Black, 'Catalogue', NLS, Adv.MS.72.1.8. See also Mackinnon, *The Descriptive Catalogue*, pp. 195–98.
[154] Black, 'Catalogue', NLS, Adv.MS.72.1.8.
[155] Black, 'Catalogue', NLS, Adv.MS.72.1.8.

a1, 'Caithreim Chellachàin Chaisil', incomplete;[156] fol. 29^{r} a29, 'Suirghech me re Mac Cailin. can re rí deigtshíl Duibhne'; fol. 29^{r} a30, 'Ri Caisil, .i. a icht amuil chraibtech, a mhuinnter amuil bheocha, a righi amuil chuiluibh';[157] fol. 29^{r} b1 'Togail Troí' (Recension 2), incomplete.[158] This is a composite manuscript formed between two sections fols. 1^{r}–27^{v} and fols. 28^{r}–37^{v}.[159]

The folio pages containing the Middle Irish *Thebaid* may be referred to as an independent homogenetic unit developed separately from the second manuscript in the compilation.[160] The unit was developed by more than one scribal hand and appears to have come from the same circle and time.[161] It can also be considered to be a defective codicological unit, due to the apparent loss of two folios between the second and third gatherings and enriched due to a later addition to the text.[162] These are discussed at **Chapter 2:2.2** below.

The unit containing the Middle Irish *Thebaid* was added to form the first part of an existing manuscript which contains an incomplete copy of the second recension of *Togail Troí* (fols. 28^{r}–37^{v}). Although these two sections were not created as a single manuscript originally, the compiler may well have decided to combine them based on the links between these vernacular translations of classical literature. For instance, thematically both narratives include the destruction of a city, and as the *Thebaid* precedes the war at Troy, the tale may have offered an attractive chronological precursor for *Togail Troí*. That the Irish *Thebaid* and *Togail Troí* were brought together in this way may demonstrate a historiographic interest on the part of the compiler, a concept which is discussed further at **Chapter 3:2**.[163] The relationship of these two texts to other material in the compilation, an incomplete version *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil* ('The Victorious Career of Cellachán of Cashel') and the genealogical tracts which sit between these classical narratives, is not obvious.

[156] *Caithréim Cellachain Caisil: the victorious career of Cellachan of Cashel, or the wars between the Irishmen and the Norsemen in the middle of the 10th century*, ed. and trans. by Alexander Bugge, Det norske historiske Kildeskriftfonds skrifter 36 (Christiania: Gundersen, 1905).
[157] *Genealogical Tracts I*, ed. by Toirdhealbhach Ó Raithbheartaigh (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1932), p. 189.
[158] Black, 'Catalogue', NLS, Adv.MS.72.1.8.
[159] Terminology derived from J. Peter Gumbert, 'Codicological Units: Towards a Terminology for the Stratigraphy of the Non-Homogeneous Codex', *Segno e testo*, 2 (2004), 17–42 (p. 26).
[160] Gumbert, p. 29.
[161] Gumbert, p. 29.
[162] See Black, 'Catalogue', NLS, Adv.MS.72.1.8m for the details of lost folio pages. For the descriptions of defective and enriched codicological unit, see Gumbert, pp. 30–33.
[163] See Poppe's discussion on the historical interests of the compilers of the Book of Ballymote in *A New Introduction*, pp. 3–5.

Fig. 4 Single-barred cross marked beside the beginning of *Scél an Mundtuirc* (*TnT*, 795) © By permission, National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS.72.1.8, fol. 5^{v} b40-52

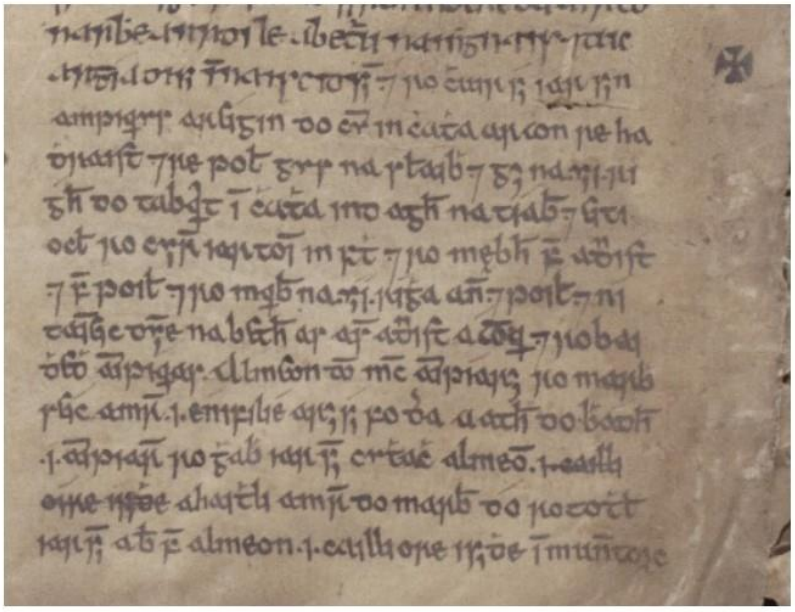


Fig. 5 Three crosses representing the men killed by Theseus in battle (*TnT*,4871-76) © By permission, National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS.72.1.8, fol. 27^{v} b12-20

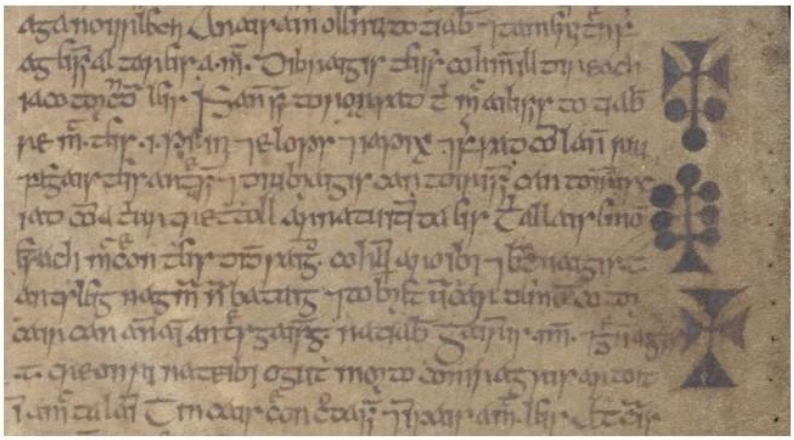


Fig. 6 Double-barred cross marking the fratricide of Eteocles and Polynices

© By permission, National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS.72.1.8, fol. 26^{r} b1-10

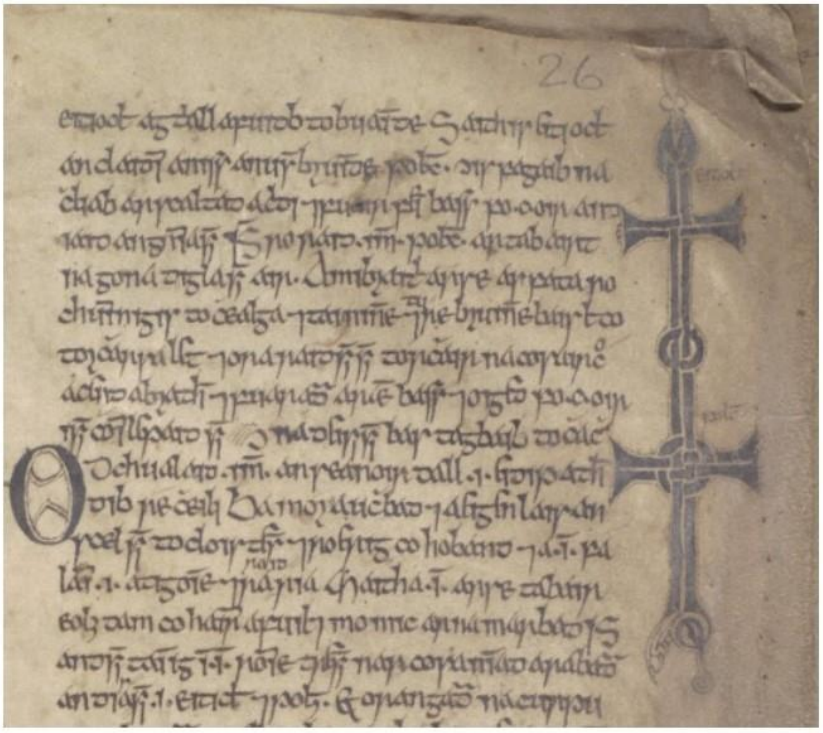


Fig. 7 Single-barred cross marking the suicide of Jocasta

© By permission, National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS.72.1.8, fol. 26^{r} b25-30

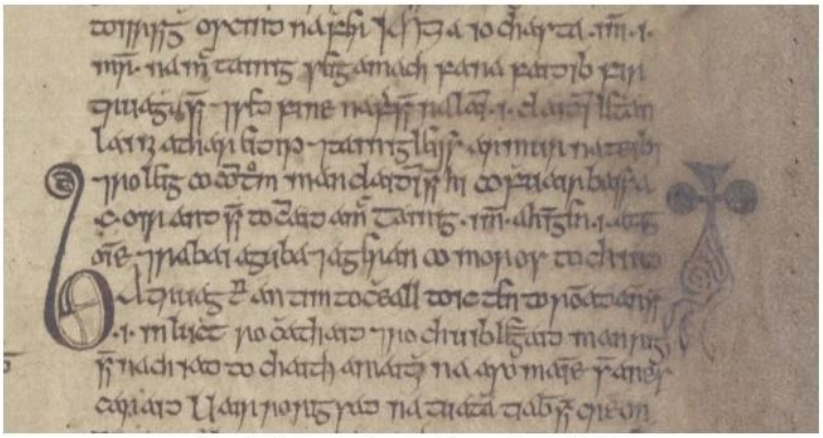


Fig. 8 Decorative enlarged capitals

© By permission, National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS.72.1.8, fol. 26^{v} b48-50

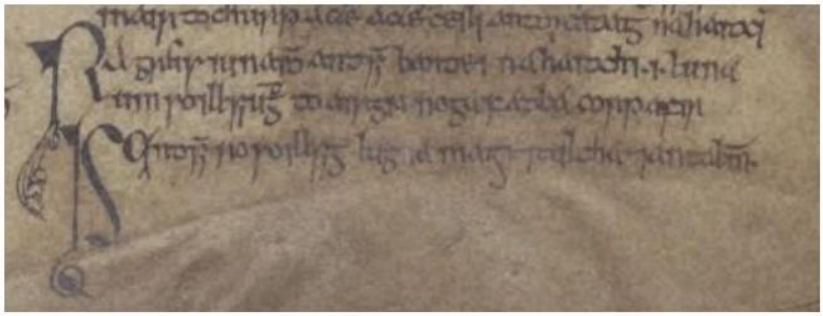


Table 1: Cross marks in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, Adv.MS.72.1.8

Folio	*TnT*	Description
5^{v} b40	795	Single-barred cross with triangular head, arms, and shaft. Beginning of *Scel an Mundtuirc*.
18^{r} a7	2786-87	Single-barred cross with triangular head, arms, and shaft. Death of Aconteus (Greek) by Phegeus (Theban).
18^{v} a16	2872-73	Single-barred cross with triangular head, arms, and shaft. Death of Phlegyas (Theban) by Amphiaraus (Greek).
18^{v} a18	2873-75	Single-barred cross with triangular head, arms, and shaft. Death of Phyleus (Theban) by Amphiaraus.
18^{v} a25	2876-80	Double-barred cross with triangular head, arms, and shaft. Deaths of Chromis and Chremataon (Thebans) by Amphiaraus.
18^{v} a33	2883-86	Three-barred cross with triangular head, arms, and shaft. Deaths of Iphinous, Sages, and Gyas (Thebans) by Amphiaraus.
18^{v} a38	2886-89	Single-barred cross with triangular head, arms, and shaft. Death of Alcathonous (Theban) by Amphiaraus.
18^{v} b15	2903-06	Four-barred cross with triangular head, arms, and shaft. Deaths of Melaneus, Antiphus, Aetion, Lampus (Thebans) by Amphiaraus.
19^{r} a11	2938-44	Single-barred cross with triangular head, arms, and shaft. Fall of Amphiaraus into the Underworld.
20^{r} a12	3097-102	Single-barred cross with triangular head, arms, and shaft. Death of Menalcas (Greek).
20^{r} a17	3103-04	Single-barred cross with triangular head, arms, and shaft. Death of Iasus (Greek) by Amyntus (Theban).
23^{r} b16	3952-56	Single-barred cross with bauble-ended head, arms and shaft. Death of Ialmenus, the harper (Theban) by Agylleus (Greek).
23^{v} a23	4007-10	Single-barred cross with triangular head, arms and extended shaft with triangular end. Death of Hopleus (Greek) by Aepytus (Theban).
23^{v} a48	4032-34	Single-barred cross with triangular head, arms and extended shaft with triangular end. Death of Dymas (Greek) by Amphion (Theban).
24^{r} a36	4118-23	Single-barred cross with triangular head, arms, and shaft. Death of Antheus (Greek) by an anonymous Theban.
24^{v} a43	4280-84	Single-barred cross with triangular head, arms and extended shaft with triangular end. Death of Capaneus (Greek) by Jupiter.
25^{r} a18	4308-10	Single-barred cross with bauble-ended head, arms and shaft. Death of Enyeus (Greek), trumpeter, by a Theban arrow shot.
26^{r} b1-10	4547-55	Double-barred cross with extended shafts and knotwork pattern. The head ends in a trefoil. The name Eteocles is written against the upper bar and Polynices alongside the lower bar. Fratricide of Eteocles and Polynices (Thebans).
26^{r} b25-30	4574-78	Single-barred cross with triangular head and bauble-ended arms and decorative shaft. Suicide of Jocasta (Theban).
27^{v}b12	4871-73	Double-barred cross with bauble-ended head and triangular shaft. The arms of the upper bar are bauble-shaped and the arms of the lower bar are triangular. Death of Olenius and Lamyrus (Thebans) by Theseus (Athenian/Greek).
27^{v} b16	4873-76	Three-barred cross with bauble-ended head and arms and triangular shaft. Death of Phyleus, Helops, and Iapyx (Thebans) by Theseus.
27^{v} b20	4876-80	Single-barred cross with triangular arms. Death of Haemon (Theban) by Theseus.
27^{v} b33	4890-95	Single-barred cross with extended shaft and diamond-shaped end. Death of Creon (Theban) by Theseus.

The Middle Irish *Thebaid* is primarily the work of three scribal hands with a variety of marginal notes added by others at a later date.[164] Two of the hands have been identified by Tomás Ó Concheanainn as those of Gilla Ísa Mac Fir Bhisigh (fols. 1^{r}–5^{v} b40, 9^{r}–22^{v}) and Tomás Cam Mac Fir Bhisigh, son of Gilla Ísa (fols. 6^{r} a28–8^{v}, 23^{r}–27^{v}), with another anonymous hand identified at fols. 5^{v} b40–6^{r} a27.[165]

An overview of the marginalia in Adv.MS.72.1.8 with translations is available in Calder's edition and Black also provides a list of these.[166] There is little decoration by the scribes, however, as **Table 1** illustrates**,** thirty-two deaths in the narrative are marked by crosses between fols. 18^{r} and 27^{v}. There is also a cross marked beside the beginning of the tale *Scél an Mundtuirc* at fol. 5^{v} b40 (**Fig. 4**). As **Table 1** highlights, except for the cross marking the beginning of *Scél an Mundtuirc*, these crosses mark very precisely the deaths of specific individuals in the narrative. In six instances, where several individuals are killed in quick succession, the number of bars on the cross indicate those dead in the adjacent paragraph. For instance, at fol. 27^{v} b12, b16 and b20 (*TnT*, 4871–76) a series of three crosses represents the men killed by Theseus in battle. The first, a double-barred cross, represents the deaths of Olenius and Lamyrus; the second, a three-barred cross, the deaths of Phyleus, Helops, and Iapyx; and the third, a single-barred cross, the death of Haemon (**Fig. 5)**.

The most decorative of the crosses is a double-barred cross at fol. 26^{r} b1–10 (*TnT*, 4547–55), which marks the fratricide of Eteocles and Polynices (**Fig. 6**). Eteocles' name is marked next to the upper bar of the cross and Polynices' name is marked alongside the lower bar. On the same folio, at fol. 26^{r} b30 (*TnT*, 4578) a single-barred cross drawn to mark Jocasta's suicide has a decorative shaft (**Fig. 7**). As Black notes, the crosses on this page appear to be the work of Tomás Cam as they share similarities in style with some of his enlarged capitals.[167] In particular, the decorative shaft on Jocasta's cross is very like those given to some capitals on fol. 26^{v} (**Fig. 8**). Aside from the crosses which can be linked to Tomás Cam's hand, it is difficult to tell if all the crosses were made by the same scribe as they differ in shape, size and style. As crosses do not appear beside every death in the narrative, it seems likely that the scribe or scribes who added these was responding to significant aspects of the marked deaths.[168] While most of the men whose deaths are marked by crosses are kings or soldiers in

[164] Black, 'Catalogue', NLS, Adv.MS.72.1.8.
[165] Tomás Ó Concheanainn, 'Gilla Ísa Mac Fir Bhisigh and a Scribe of His School', *Èriu*, 25 (1974), 157–71. Ó Concheanainn does not discuss the hand at fols. 5^{v} b40–6^{r} a27; however, this is noted by Black, 'Catalogue', NLS, Adv.MS.72.1.8, and Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', pp. 77–78.
[166] See Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, pp. xv–xvii and Black, 'Catalogue', NLS, Adv.MS.72.1.8. See also Plummer, p. 30.
[167] Black, 'Catalogue', NLS, Adv.MS.72.1.8.
[168] Crosses also appear alongside the text of the second recension of *Togail Troí* in Edinburgh, NLS, Adv.MS.72.1.15 at pp. 13, 15, 29, 33–35, 37, 38, 40–42.

the Theban or Argive army, the deaths of two musicians, Ialmenus, a Theban harper, and Enyeus, a Greek trumpeter, are also highlighted by cross marks.

2.2.2 Lost folio pages, lacunas, and additions in Adv.MS.72.1.8

As noted above, the section of Adv.MS.72.1.8 containing the Middle Irish *Thebaid* should be considered to be a defective codicological unit.[169] The reason for this is twofold; firstly, Black highlights that between the second and third gatherings two folios appear to be missing, and secondly, Miles shows how lacunae left by Gilla Ísa and Tomás Cam in the text imply a defective exemplar.[170] The first lacuna begins at fol. 5^{v} b40 (**Fig. 4**) and continues to fol. 6^{r} a28 (**Fig. 9**). The break in the Irish text corresponds with *Thebaid*, II.302–429. The section of the text relating to fol. 5^{v} b40–6^{r} a27 (*TnT*, 795–827) represents a change in scribal hand and is named in a closing rubric as *Scél an Mundtuirc* ('The Story of the Necklace').[171] Miles convincingly argues that the inclusion of *Scél an Mundtuirc* does not represent part of the original translation and demonstrates the interpolated narrative's correspondence to parts of the *Riss* found in RIA, D iv 2, fol. 71^{r} a–71^{v} b.[172] It is useful to quote Miles's observations at length:

> It is inescapable that Gilla Ísa left off copying at the point where he noticed that his exemplar was defective, presumably with the hope of securing a second copy to make good the loss. If, as appears to the be the case, Gilla Ísa and Tomás coordinated their efforts and left blank only a space they believed could later be supplied from a second copy, it follows that they suspected only the equivalent of a single column had been lost. The manner in which the third scribe handled the transition from his *Scél an Mundtuirc* back to *Togail na Tebe* is worth noting. This scribe copied the final part of *Scél an Mundtuirc* into roughly the first third of the first column on fol. 6r. He then left a blank space equivalent to approximately five lines, after which he copied a further six lines from the *Riss* (§3), which explain that Tydeus has been sent to speak with Eteocles and which record the first part of their interview (at *Togail na Tebe* 828–33). These six lines make good the loss of the text that translated *Thebaid* 2.306–429 and bring the action precisely to the point where Tomás's scribal exemplar must have continued. With the material to make good the lost text having been supplied, a further space equivalent to approximately two lines was left before Tomás's section.[173]

[169] Gumbert, p. 30.
[170] See Black, 'Catalogue', NLS, Adv.MS.72.1.8, and Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', pp. 77–78.
[171] A small cross to the right of the text appears to mark the beginning of this tale.
[172] Brent Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', pp. 76–79.
[173] Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', pp. 77–78.

Thus, Miles explains how the third scribal hand in this manuscript provides a replacement for much of the missing section of the *Thebaid* here. This third hand appears to have put in these additions at a later date to the text produced by either Gilla Ísa or Tomás Cam.[174]

Yet the additions of *Scél an Mundtuirc* from the *Riss* do not form a full replacement of what was lost in the *Thebaid* and it must be remembered that the lines from II.306–88 are not covered in the replacement tale. This left the reader without the following episodes in the narrative: Polynices' desire to return to Thebes (II.306–32); Argia expressing her concerns to Polynices (II.332–52); Polynices' reassurances to Argia (II.352–62); Polynices' consultation with Tydeus and Adrastus (II.363–71); Statius's address to Tydeus (II.371–74); and Tydeus's travel and arrival at Thebes (II.375–88). As Miles demonstrates, the break in the text is highly suggestive of a lost folio of the translation, and the loss of these episodes appear to support this argument.[175] It is important, therefore, that modern readers bear in mind the content and evidence in the manuscripts available before using the absence of a section of text to discuss the medieval Irish redactor's intention in cutting these scenes.

For instance, Harris argues that the 'pillow talk' between Argia and Polynices (*Thebaid*, II.332–62) was entirely cut from the narrative because it did not fit into the expectations of the contemporary audience. He writes that the native Irish audience, 'merely expected something in a recognizable pattern - and scenes consisting of nothing but intimate talk can find no foothold in the extroverted, action-orientated oral world.'[176] This assertion is unsubstantiated because the omission of this material corresponds with a lacuna in the Irish text. Harris's argument is also challenged by the inclusion of a scene centred upon *comrád chind chercaille* ('pillow talk') between Aillil and Medb at the outset of *Táin Bó Cuailnge* in the Book of Leinster (hereafter *TBC-LL*) at *TBC-LL*, 1–3.

A further lacuna is found in Adv.MS.72.1.8 at fol. 7^{r} a41 (*TnT*, 1041), corresponding to *Thebaid*, II.687–III.269 (**Fig. 10**). Here, the scribe Tomás left only a small space in the middle of the line at fol. 7^{r} a41. The text breaks off at line 1041, just as Minerva begins to address Tydeus, son of the king of Calydon, and cautions him against returning immediately to Thebes in triumph (*TnT*, 1038–41). As the text in Egerton 1781 is more complete at this point, Calder used the text from Egerton 1781, fol. 95^{v} b7–17 for his edition. This additional text from Egerton 1781 corresponds roughly to *Thebaid*, II.687–89 and III.260–74 and is discussed at **Chapter 2:3.2** below.

[174] Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', p. 78.
[175] Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', p. 77.
[176] Harris, p. 164.

Fig. 9 End of first lacuna in Adv.MS.72.1.8

© By permission, National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS.72.1.8, fol. 6^{r} a1-30

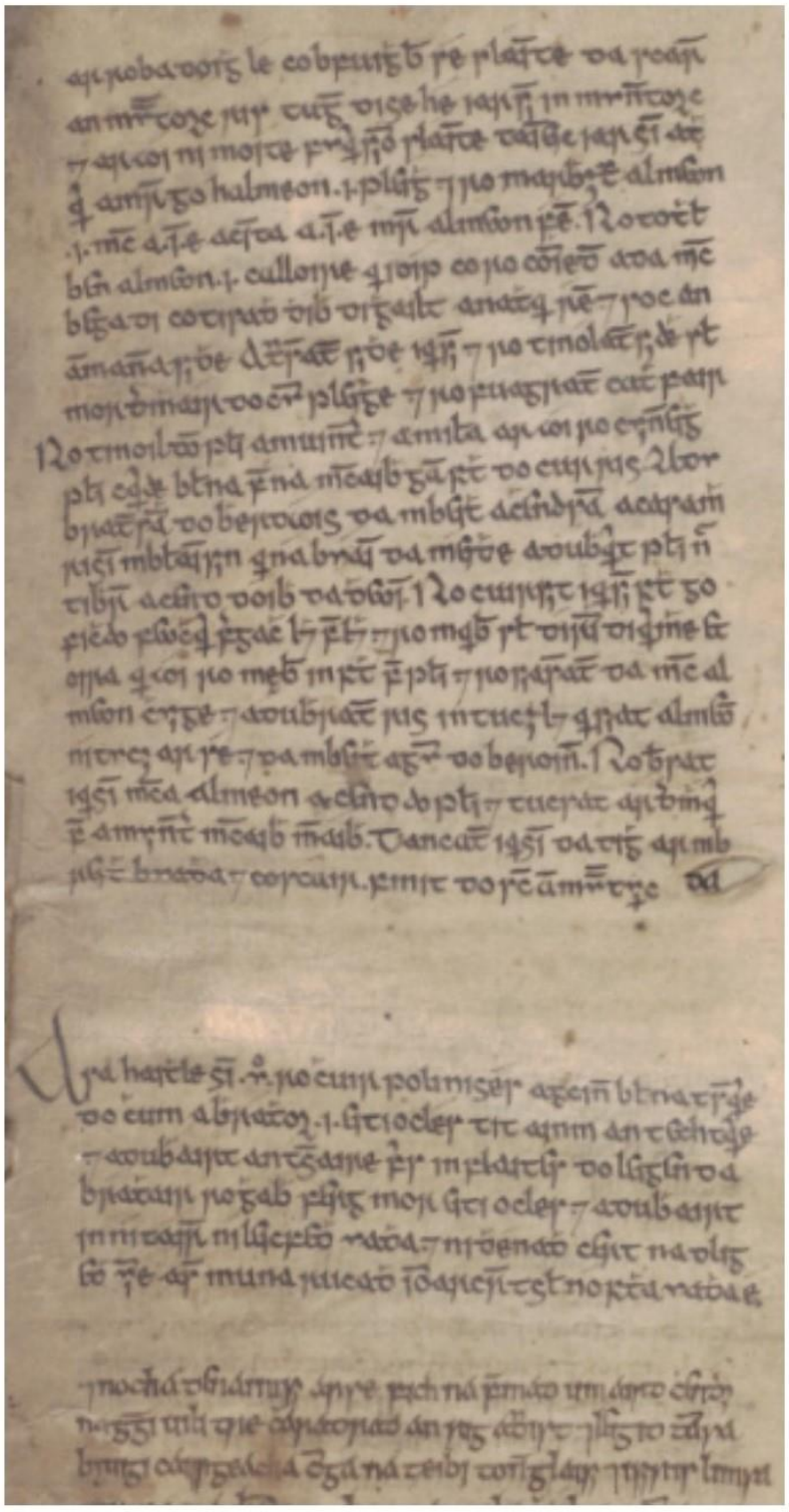


Fig. 10 Lacuna in Adv.MS.72.1.8 at fol. 7^{r}a41 (*TnT*, 1041), corresponding to *Thebaid*, II.687- III.269
© By permission, National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS.72.1.8, fol. 7^{r} a33-51

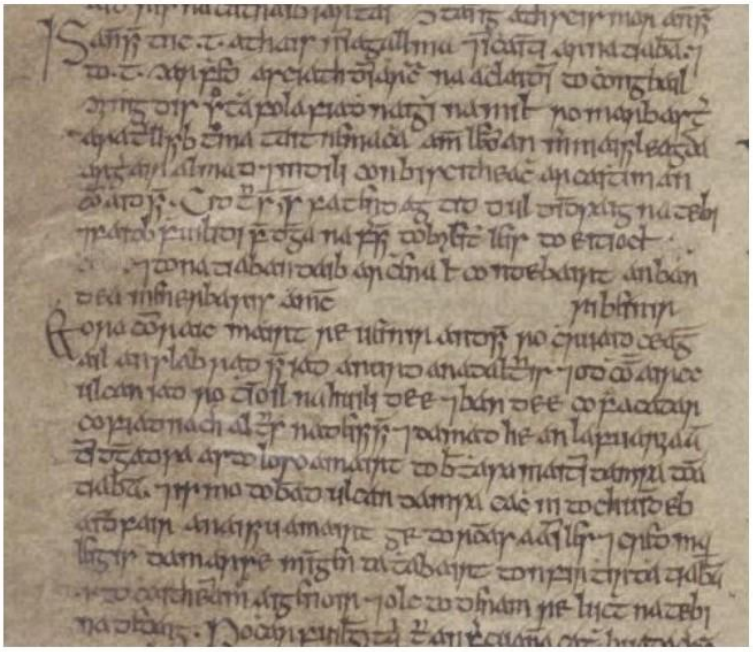
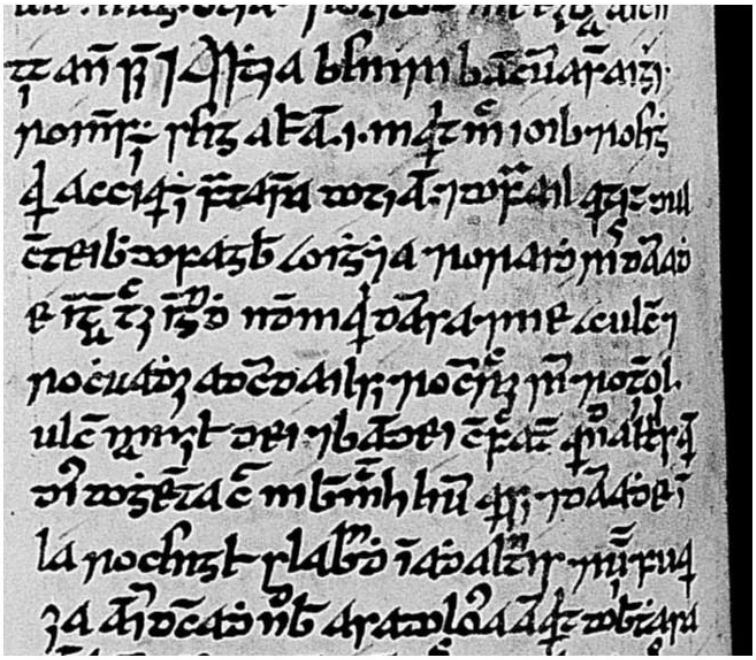


Fig. 11 Heavily stacked script at fol. 95^{v}b12-21
© British Library Board, Egerton 1781



In both Adv.MS.72.1.8 and Egerton 1781 the loss of material from the end of *Thebaid* Book II and the beginning of Book III marks another large break in the translation of the original epic poem covering several episodes: Maeon's survival and return to Thebes (II.690–703); Tydeus's shrine of booty and prayer to Athene Itonia (II.704–43); Eteocles anticipating the return of his soldiers (III.1–32); Maeon's journey to Thebes (III.33–52); Maeon's arrival at Thebes, his report to Eteocles followed by his suicide, and denial of burial (III.53–98); Statius's address to Maeon (III.99–113); the gathering of the Theban dead and the burial of the dead (III.114–76); Aletes' speech and indictment of Eteocles' behaviour (III.176–217); Jupiter's summons to Mars (III.218–29); Jupiter's instruction that Mars spread desire for war through Argos (III.230–39); Jupiter's warning to the Olympians against obstructing his will (III.239–52); and the reaction of the Olympians to Jupiter's threats (III.253–59).

Tomás's lacuna draws the reader's attention to this loss of text, perhaps suggesting that his exemplar also had a break at this point, or that the folio page he was working from had perished.[177] In contrast to the space left between fol. 5^{v} b40 and fol. 6^{r} a28, the small size of the lacuna at fol. 7^{r} a41 compared to the original text lost seems to imply that the scribe had little idea of how much of the text was missing. Harris suggests that the episodes documenting Maeon's return to Thebes and his subsequent suicide were purged due to their 'emotionally effusive nature'.[178] This argument, however, cannot be corroborated given the scribe's acknowledgement of a lacuna in the text here.

There is also a considerable loss of text in Adv.MS.72.1.8 between fol. 22^{v} and fol. 23^{r} corresponding to *TnT*, 3547–3892 and *Thebaid*, IX.281–X.49. Black suggests the loss of two folios here.[179] Calder was able to bridge this gap in the text with the corresponding material in Egerton 1781 at fols. 116^{v} a26–119^{v} a16.[180]

Finally, although neither a lost page nor a lacuna, it is important to highlight that the text on Adv.MS.72.1.8, fol. 1^{r} is almost totally illegible. As a result, Calder used the text from Egerton 1781, fols. 87^{r} a1–87^{v} b10 for lines 1–80 of his edition and then switched to Adv.MS.72.1.8 at fol. 1^{v} a1. While it is currently not possible to identify whether the text on Adv.MS.72.1.8, fol. 1^{r} was the same as the text at the start of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* in Egerton 1781, from Adv.MS.72.1.8, fol. 1^{v} onwards the narratives agree, with the exception of occasional textual differences, absences, and additions in Egerton 1781.[181]

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[177] The latter suggestion follows Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', p. 77.
[178] Harris, p. 164.
[179] Black, 'Catalogue', NLS, Adv.MS.72.1.8.
[180] *TnT*, 3870–92 is also represented in the fragments from TCD 1298. See Meyer, 'The T.C.D. fragments', pp. 121–22.
[181] Calder highlights these textual differences between the two manuscripts in footnotes throughout his edition. Absences and additions in the Egerton 1781 text are briefly discussed at **Chapter 2:3.2**.

2.3 London, British Library, Egerton 1781

2.3.1 Manuscripts and scribes

In the *BL Cat.* Flower provides a comprehensive listing of the texts in Egerton 1781, which includes the Middle Irish *Thebaid*.[182] The basic description of the manuscript is as follows:

> Vellum: *circ.* 1484–1487. 9 in. x 6¼ in (many of the leaves are irregular in size); ff. 156 (single folios or quires have been lost before f. 1 and after ff. 37, 128, 146, 153, cf. art. 31.[183]

Flower identifies Egerton 1781 as having been written in two hands. The first hand, that of an anonymous scribe who wrote at the house of Niall Ó Siaghail *c*. 1484, appears to have produced the majority of the material in the manuscript fols. 1–86^{v}, 147^{r}–153^{v}.[184] The second hand, that of Diarmaid Bacach Mac Parrthaláin, occupies fols. 87^{r}–146^{v} and includes the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. Flower suggests that the scribes were probably members of the same family, partly because a Conall Ballach Mac Parrthaláin, who wrote in the house of Niall Ó Siaghail, is known to have written Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B 513 in the late fifteenth century.[185]

According to Gumbert's terminology, Egerton 1781 can be viewed as a composite manuscript, with a number of independent articulated homogenetic codicological units, as it was produced within the same circle within a three-year period, but was worked on at different times by different scribes.[186] The manuscript is defective as it appears to have lost at least sixteen folios.[187] In its current state, Egerton 1781 contains thirty-two texts covering a wide variety of different subject matter, for instance, religious tales (such as hagiographies), romances, and praise poetry in Middle Irish. These are largely translation texts, such as the Legend of the Holy Cross (fol. 1^{r}), the tale of Fierabras (fol. 2^{r}), the Life of Saint Margaret (fol. 49^{v}), a fragmentary copy of the Gospel History in *Leabhar Breac* (fol. 75^{r}), and the epistle of Prester John to the Emperor Emanuel (fol. 151^{r}). The only association between these texts seems to be that they represent a collection of vernacular translations, in what is otherwise very much a miscellanea of historical and religious narratives. The Middle Irish *Thebaid*,

[182] Flower, *BL Cat.*, II (1926), pp. 526–45.
[183] Flower, *BL Cat.*, II (1926), p. 526.
[184] The house of Niall Ó Siaghail was based at Baile Uí Shiaghail, now Ballyshiel, Barony of Garrycastle, Country Offaly, see Flower, *BL Cat.*, II (1926), p. 542.
[185] Flower, *BL Cat.*, II (1926), p. 526 and pp. 542–43.
[186] Gumbert, pp. 32–33.
[187] Flower, *BL Cat.*, II (1926), p. 545.

which is the longest text in the manuscript, stands out as being the only translation of a classical epic in this compilation.

It is possible to view the Middle Irish *Thebaid* as a separate block within the manuscript, as it represents the start of both a new scribal hand and a new narrative.[188] As well as providing the Irish *Thebaid*, Mac Parrthaláin's work in Egerton 1781 includes a poem on the character and genealogy of Cormac Mac Samhradháin, Bishop of Ardagh (fol. 128^{v}), and Fínghin Ó Mathghamhna's translation of the Buke of Maundeville (fols. 129^{r}–146^{v}).

2.3.2 Absences and additions in Egerton 1781

Calder observes that the Egerton 1781 text of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* can be shown to be later than the Edinburgh text based on a *penn gles* ('pen test') reading 'Tichead a doranig' ('a thickness which has come to it [the ink]') in the text at fol. 6^{v} b53 in Adv.MS.72.1.8 (*TnT*, 998), which was repeated in Egerton 1781, fol. 95^{v} a4.[189] Bearing in mind Miles's research demonstrating that *Scél an Mundtuirc* was a later addition to Adv.MS.72.1.8, it is also worth noting that this tale is incorporated as part of the main text in Egerton 1781, fol. 93^{v} b24 – 94^{r} a22; where it is also acknowledged under the title 'Scél an Mundtuirc'. Miles observes that if his comments on the creation of the text of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* in Adv.MS.72.1.8 are correct, then it would 'confirm that the text in Egerton 1781 is in a line of transmission from 72.1.8 itself, and is not an independent witness to the original translation'.[190] While this evidence does support the idea that Egerton 1781 was in a line of transmission with Adv.MS.72.1.8, it should be noted that there are differences between the texts and that Mac Parrthaláin's text incorporated additions which are not included in Adv.MS.72.1.8. Affinities between Egerton 1781's text and the fragments in TCD 1298 provide evidence that these two are closely linked too.[191]

Calder explains that 'there are additions in the Eg. MS. added as the story became more familiar, in parts that seemed to lack clearness or interest, e.g. 1041–1051, 1059, 1062–1065, 4801–4810'.[192] These additions in Egerton 1781 may suggest a more complex history in the later development of the text than Calder allows for. The first three examples he gives originate from Egerton 1781, fol. 95^{v} b8–31. Calder uses Egerton 1781, fol. 95^{v} b7–17 for *TnT*, 1041–1051, thus bridging a lacuna in the text at Adv.MS.72.1.8, fol. 7^{r} a41 (see **Chapter**

[188] Gumbert, pp. 22–26.
[189] Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, p. xi.
[190] Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', p. 77.
[191] Meyer, 'The T.C.D. fragments', p. 132.
[192] Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, pp. xi–xii.

2:2.2). The additional text in Egerton 1781 corresponds roughly to *Thebaid*, II.686–89 Minerva's advice to Tydeus (cf. *TnT*, 1041–45); *Thebaid*, III.260–68 Venus's approach to Mars (cf. *TnT*, 1045–49); and *Thebaid*, III.268–74 the beginning of Venus' plea to Mars (*TnT*, 1049–51). In Calder's edition, the lacuna in Adv.MS.72.1.8 can be seen in contrast to the text in Egerton 1781. The Egerton 1781 text is highlighted here in italics.[193]

> Cid tra acht is ed fa tend ag Tid dul d' indsaig na Tebi 7 faidb fhuilidi forderga na fer sin do breith leis do Eitiocles 7 dona Tiabandaib ar chena noco ndebairt an bandea Menerba ris: 'A mic *ri[g] na Calidone,' ar si, 'ca misgais no ca migradh fuil agut fort fen intan tegi dod tinnlacadh do Tiabandaib? Et na mill in coscar rochuiris 7 na mórgnima doronais, 7 doghebat Grécaigh uili cathugud o Tiabandaib.' Ocus rotinntodh Menerbha aicnedh Tit andsin.*[194]
>
> *Imthusa*[7] *Beniri banchumachtaigi*[195] *roinnsaigh seig a lennan .i. Mairt, mac Ioib, 7 roeigh air, acc iarraidh furtachta, do Tiabandaib. Ocus dofurail ar Tit dul co Teibh do fagbail a oidhedha, 7 roraidh ris: 'Da madh e intan tucais in gradh ndermair dam-sa, 7 mé ac Ulcan, 7 rochuadhus ad chomdail-si 7 rochomracais*[196] *rim* ri Beinir.' (*TnT*, 1038–51)
>
> However, this was the intention Tydeus had, to go to Thebes, and to take with him the bloody crimson spoils of those men to Eteocles and to all the Thebans until the goddess Minerva said to him: 'Son of *the king of Calydon,' said she, 'what hatred or what aversion do you have for yourself when you go to surrender yourself to the Thebans? And do not spoil the victory you have gained and the great deeds you have done, and all the Greeks will have fighting from the Thebans.' And Minerva then changed Tydeus' mind.*
>
> *Concerning Venus, the mighty one, she approached her lover, that is, Mars, son of Jupiter, and she cried out to him, demanding help for the Thebans, and she urged Tydeus to go to Thebes to meet his violent death, and she said to [Mars]: 'If it were when you gave very great love to me, though I was Vulcan's, and I went to meet you, and you had intercourse with me* with Venus.'

Calder's original English translation for the point at which he left off using Egerton 1781 and returned to Adv.MS.72.1.8 reads 'and didst embrace me - Venus' (*TnT*, 1051). This appears to combine the words 'rochomracais rim' ('had intercourse with me') from Egerton 1781, with 'ri Beinir' ('with Venus') from Adv.MS.72.1.8. Yet the two texts cannot be married so neatly together.

It is not entirely clear which part of the episode between Venus and Mars at *Thebaid*, III.260–74 the words 'ri Beinir' from Adv.MS.72.1.8 relate to. In Adv.MS.72.1.8 the text which follows these words appear to correspond to *Thebaid*, III.273–74, where Venus alludes

[193] Calder provides the Egerton 1781 text in square brackets.
[194] In Calder's edition a break was included in the text here to show the end of *Thebaid* Book II and the start of *Thebaid* Book III. There is no break in the text at this point in either Adv.MS.72.1.8 or Egerton 1781.
[195] *eDIL* s.v. *cumachtach*. Calder translates 'mighty goddess'.
[196] *eDIL* s.v. *con-ricc*. Calder translates 'embraced me'.

to her affair with Mars while chastising him for setting out to start war at Thebes, 'hoc fama pudorque relictus, | hoc mihi Lemniacae de te meruere catenae?' ('Is this the reward of guilt? Is this what my fame and honour abandoned and Lemnos' chains have deserved of you?'). The text from Adv.MS.72.1.8 provides the background information to explain Venus's reference to 'Lemniacae catenae' ('Lemnos's chains') and was used by Calder for *TnT*, 1051–55:

> [...] ri[197] Beinir.' Et o racomraic Mairt ré Ueínir andsin, rochruaid-cheangail an slabrad sin iad a n-urd a n-adaltrais, 7 odchonnaircc Ulcan iad, rothinoil na huili dee 7 bandee co fhacadar co fiadnach a[da]ltras na deisi sin.[198]
>
> [...] with Venus.' And when Mars had intercourse with Venus there, that chain bound them securely in the act of adultery; and when Vulcan saw them, he assembled all the gods and goddesses so that they saw plainly the adultery of those two.

This material, relating to Venus and Mars's adultery, is an addition to the Middle Irish *Thebaid* which is attested in both manuscripts.[199] The corresponding text from Egerton 1781, however, which follows on from *TnT*, 1051 in Calder's edition, is not a precise copy of Adv.MS.72.1.8:[200]

> *'7 rochomracais rim 7 rotinoil Ulcan na n-uili dei 7 bandei co facatar ar* n-altranas[201] *arndis, doghenta cach ni bud mhaith lium'*[202] *ar si 'da madh e in la rocengail slabrad i n-adhaltras etruinn 7 fuarusa an imdercad n-adbul asa do losa a Mairt.'* (Egerton 1781, fol. 95^{v} b17–21)
>
> *'and you had intercourse with me and Vulcan gathered all the gods and goddesses so that they saw the adultery of us two, he would be do everything I would have wanted,' said she, 'if it were on that day he bound a chain of adultery between us, and I got great shame from it because of you, O Mars.'*[203]

Unlike the passage from Adv.MS.72.1.8, fol. 7^{r} a41–44, which is written in the third person, the text in Egerton 171 here reflects Venus's direct speech.[204]

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[197] *eDIL* s.v. *fri*, from the Middle Irish form. Calder translates 'before'.
[198] Adv.MS.72.1.8, fol. 7^{r} a41–44.
[199] Although no direct source for the additional material on Venus and Mars in *TnT* has been found to date, the tale of Vulcan trapping Venus and Mars in chains as they committed adultery is alluded to by Statius at *Thebaid*, III.273, III.274 and VII.62–63. Notes on Statius's references to Venus and Mars's adultery are provided in Lactantius's commentary, *ISTC*, III.519–25, III.526–31, and VII.144–56. The story is also transmitted in Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 148 and VM II, 144.
[200] Calder provided the continuation of the Egerton 1781 text at fol. 95^{v} b17–21 (*TnT*, 1051) as a note at the bottom of *Togail na Tebe*, p. 66.
[201] Egerton 1781 has 'nd-altranas', with nd- for the conventional n- to mark eclipsis.
[202] At this point it seems possible that the scribe became confused with the text *TnT*, 1057–58.
[203] The translation here is my own.
[204] It is possible that the translator included exegetical information in a section of direct speech. See **Chapter 4:3.1** and **Chapter 5:3.2** for examples.

There are also differences in the exegesis of the trap set by Vulcan to catch Venus and Mars in the act of adultery in Egerton 1781. In Adv.MS.72.1.8 the description of the chains which bind Mars and Venus is given before the information that Vulcan gathered all the gods and goddesses to see them there. This contrasts to Egerton 1781 where the explanation that Vulcan gathered the gods and goddesses to see Venus and Mars in the act of adultery comes before the explanation that the couple were bound in chains. There are a number of possibilities which may account for these differences. It is possible that the text at Egerton 1781, fol. 95^{v} b17–21 may have been corrupt in the exemplar, or perhaps Mac Parrthaláin made a mistake when copying. Alternatively, as **Fig. 11** shows, the script is heavily stacked at this point in Egerton 1781, which suggests that Mac Parrthaláin was concerned to save space while copying this section and may have purposefully altered the text from his exemplar to do so.

The next addition in Egerton 1781, highlighted by Calder, comes at *TnT*, 1059 and relates to *Thebaid*, III. 281–86 where Venus bewails her daughter's marriage into the Theban line. The supplementary text in Egerton 1781 is shown below in italics.

'solum hoc tamen anxia, solum | obtestor, quid me Tyrio sociare marito | progeniem caram infaustisque dabas hymenaeis, | dum fore praeclaros armis et vivida rebus | pectora vipereo Tyrios de sanguine iactas | demissumque Iovis serie genus?' (*Thebaid*, III.281–86)	'Et créd mar-leigis dam,' ar si, 'in ingen *rucus duitsi dar cend Ulcain .i. Erimone* da thabairt don fir Thirdha Tiabanda .i. do [C]haitheam mac Aigenoir, 7 olc do denam ré lucht na Tebi 'na degaid?' (*TnT*, 1058–62)
'Yet this only in anguish I adjure you, only this: why did you have me join my dear child to a Tyrian husband in ill-starred nuptials, boasting that Tyrians of viper blood, race descended of Jupiter's line, shall be renowned in arms, hearts lively for action?'	'And why did you allow me,' said she, 'to give the girl *I bore to you in spite of Vulcan, that is, Harmonia,* to the Tyrian man of the Thebans, that is, to Cadmus son of Agenor, and to do evil to the people of Thebes thereafter?'

The elaboration clarifies that the child Venus bore to Mars was Harmonia and emphasises that Harmonia was born from Venus's adulterous relationship with Mars, rather than to her husband Vulcan.

Further elaboration on the consequences of Venus and Mars's extra-marital affair can be found in the lines which follow in the Egerton 1781 text, when Venus identifies Vulcan as responsible for the plight of the Thebans. She says to Mars:

> *'Et is nair duitsi,' ar si, 'corob treisi Ulcan re milliud na Tiabanda ina duitsi 'ca n-anacul. Uair is é Ulcan tre ét umaitsiu tuc forru cach col da ndernatis .i. in muintorc tuc doibh.'* (*TnT*, 1062–65)

> *'And it is a shame upon you,' said she, 'that Vulcan is stronger to destroy the Thebans than you to protect them. For it is Vulcan, through jealousy of you, that brought upon them every sin they committed, that is, by the necklace which he gave them.'*

This passage does not follow the corresponding text at *Thebaid*, III.286–91. It seems possible, however, that the author of these lines may have developed them from reading about Harmonia's necklace in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. For instance, *TnT*, 752–94 (cf. *Thebaid*, II.265–302) includes details of Vulcan's production of the necklace to punish Harmonia and to cause strife for anyone that had it.[205]

The next of Calder's examples is *TnT*, 4801–10, which provides a genealogy for Urbius Urbibens. This is Hippolyte's son, who appears in Virgil's *Aeneid*, VII.774–77 and subsequently in *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, 1770 (see discussion in **Chapter 3:2**). Another addition in the Egerton 1781 text, not cited by Calder, is also relevant to this discussion. At *TnT*, 4904–16, there is a description of the extent of Theseus's kingdom after the war at Thebes, the fate of Argia, and an explanation that Argia and Polynices' son, Thersander, was the twenty-seventh Greek king present at the siege of Troy (see also **Chapter 3:2**). This additional information is also present in the text from the TCD fragments of the Middle Irish *Thebaid*.[206]

Having considered some of the additions in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* text in Egerton 1781, it is also worth noting Calder's assessment of omissions in this manuscript. He writes 'Further the Eg. MS. omits many unimportant details, as doubtless the scribe intended to economise space.'[207] Calder draws attention to *TnT*, 272 as an example. Close examination of this line in Egerton 1781, fol. 91^{v} a26 reveals that rather than deliberately missing out a section Mac Parrthaláin may have made a mistake in his copying at this point. The text present in Adv.MS.72.1.8 and absent from Egerton 1781 is given in bold:

> Is andsin rofalchait retla roglana na firmaminti foluamnigi o nellaib imdorchaib imdaib usqidib 7 rohoslaicit uamanda ai[d]bli **acgarba** Éoil, ardrig na ṅgaeth, **in tan sin co rothocaib inn ainbthine garb geimreta a tuasan 7 a tommaithium os aird[208] tre chomtroit na ngaeth ngarb** ngluair mbruthach mbres-madmannach[209] dar bragaid a chele tre chetharairdib na cruindi. (*TnT*, 269–75)
>
> Then the clear stars of the fluttering firmament were hidden by clouds black with many waters, and the huge **tempestuous** caves of Aeolus, high-king of the winds, **then opened so that a rough wintry storm raised aloft its pursuit and threatening out**

[205] In **Chapter 4:5** the use of Lactantius's commentary in developing this section of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* is explored in detail.
[206] Cf. TCD 1298, p. 460b. See Meyer, 'The T.C.D fragments', p. 132.
[207] Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, p. xi.
[208] *eDIL* s.v. 1 *aird*, adverbial phrase. Calder misses out this phrase out from his translation.
[209] Calder transcribed *mbresmadmandach*; however, Adv.MS.72.1.8 gives *mbresmadmannach* as noted in *eDIL* s.v. 1 *bres*.

> **loud through the battling together of the rough** clear furious crashing [winds] over one another's necks through the four quarters of the world.

The loss of text in the passage from Egerton 1781 makes the narrative confusing to read as the missing text is needed to make sense of the rest of this section. Thus, Calder's assessment that omissions such as these were made in order to save space requires further exploration.

2.4 Dublin, TCD, MS 1298

Two fragments of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* can be found in TCD 1298, pp. 457–58 and 459–60. TCD 1298 is a composite manuscript probably formed originally from three separate codices. The fragments of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* text are sewn in at the end of the final volume.[210] The first section is fourteenth century and contains genealogical material; the second and third sections date to the late fifteenth century and contain various Irish narratives and translations of classical literature and romances.[211] Aisling Byrne notes of the fragments that 'the state of TCD 1298 make it impossible to ascertain whether this copy of *Togail na Tebe* had any association with the other contents of the manuscript in the Middle Ages'.[212] The text was originally misidentified as being a fragment of *Togail Troí*; a confusion resolved by Gwyn, who recognised where the fragments came from using Mackinnon's unfinished edition and translation while working on the 1921 revised edition of the Trinity College catalogue of Irish manuscripts.[213]

The fragments date from 1479, the year having been provided by the scribe at the end of the text.[214] Meyer identifies that these fragments relate to *TnT*, 3870–4028 and *TnT*, 4811–4923.[215] Meyer notes a close affinity to the text in the Egerton 1781 and the evidence for this can be seen in the notes comparing the texts which accompany Meyer's edition of the fragments. As highlighted in **Chapter 2:3.2**, some of the additional material in Egerton 1781 also appears in the TCD 1298 fragments. Thus, considering the integration of the tale *Scél an Mundtuirc* in the Egerton 1781 text from Adv.MS.72.1.8, it seems probable that the fragments in TCD 1298 were part of an intermediary text between the two. If that were the case,

[210] Meyer, 'The T.C.D. fragments', p. 120 and Aisling Byrne, 'Cultural Intersections in Trinity College Dublin MS 1298', in *Adapting Text and Styles in a Celtic Context*, ed. by Harlos, Harlos and Poppe, pp. 289–304.
[211] For more on these romance texts, see Aisling Byrne, 'The Circulation of Romances from England in Late-Medieval Ireland', in *Medieval Romance and Material Culture*, ed. by Nicholas Perkins (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2015), pp. 183–98.
[212] Byrne, 'Cultural Intersections', p. 292.
[213] Abbott and Gwyn, *Catalogue*, p. 80 and p. 337.
[214] Meyer, 'The T.C.D. fragments', p. 132. Calder gives the date as 1379, see *Togail na Tebe*, p. xi.
[215] Meyer, 'The T.C.D. fragments', p. 120.

additional material in TCD 1298 and Egerton 1781 may represent fifteenth-century additions to the text.

2.5 A late medieval literary revival? Evidence from the Middle Irish *Thebaid* manuscripts

In this section, I explore how the identity of the scribes of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and information left by them in the late fourteenth and fifteenth century manuscripts may help modern scholars to understand how the texts were viewed during the times in which they were copied. To begin with, I explore when and where these copies were made.

The presence of the scribal hands of Gilla Ísa and Tomás Cam in Adv.MS.72.1.8 may provide some evidence of when and where the manuscript was produced. Gilla Ísa was the poet and historian to Ó Dubhda of Tír Fhiachrach, in the Barony of Tireragh, Sligo, and is believed to have been most active *c*. 1380–1417, during the reign of Ruaidhri Ó Dubhda, king of Tir Fhiachrach.[216] Ó Concheannain suggests that Tomás Cam succeeded Gilla Ísa as *ollamh* ('chief scholar') during the reign of Tadhg Riabhach (*c*. 1417–32). If the identification of the scribal hands is correct, then the date of the manuscripts can be estimated as late fourteenth to fifteenth century.

Both Ó Concheanainn and James Carney have observed that Gilla Ísa contributed to both *Leabhar Buidhe Leacáin* ('The Yellow Book of Lecan', *c*. 1391–92) at Dublin, TCD, MS 1318 and to *Leabhar Leacain* ('The Book of Lecan', *c*. 1417–18) at Dublin, RIA, MS 23 P 2, for which he was also the principal scribe.[217] He and his pupils, Murchadh Ó Cuidlis, Adhamh Ó Cuirnín, and Tomás Cam, seem to have worked on the latter manuscript at a scriptorium in Lecan, hence the name of the book.[218]

In contrast, little is known about the fragments in TCD 1298, although the scribe did date his text 'm.cccclxxix'.[219] Mac Parrthaláin, the scribe of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* in Egerton 1781 left a scribal note at the end of his copy of the text, which explains that he worked on it while in the barony of Tullyhaw, co. Cavan, in 1487.[220] Mac Parrthaláin notes where he

[216] Tomás Ó Concheanainn, 'The Scribe of the Leabhar Breac', *Ériu*, 24 (1973), 64-79 (Appendix II, p. 76).
[217] Ó Concheanainn, 'Gilla Ísa Mac Fir Bhisigh', p. 157 and James Carney, 'Literature in Irish, 1169–1534', in *A New History of Ireland: Vol. II Medieval Ireland, 1169–1534*, ed. by Art Cosgrove (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 688-707 (p. 691). See also Thomas F. O'Rahilly, Kathleen Mulchrone, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick et. al., *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy* [hereafter *RIA Cat.*], 28 fasciculi (Dublin: RIA, 1934), xiii, pp. 1552–54.
[218] Ó Concheanainn, 'Gilla Ísa Mac Fir Bhisigh', p. 157 n.1 and pp. 169–70.
[219] Abbott and Gwyn, *Catalogue*, p. 80.
[220] Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, p. xxiii.

wrote the text and explains whose patronage he was under: '7 Feilimid mac Tomais meic Fergail meic Tomais údh tigerna a Tellach Echach re linn in lebairsia do sgribad' ('And the hospitality of the son of Thomas the son of Fergus son of that Thomas lord of Tullyhaw during the time when this book was written').[221]

Carney suggests that the number of manuscripts which have survived from between 1370–1500 are suggestive of a period of literary revival in Ireland.[222] The texts of the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, then, all appear to have been copied as part of this revival. In particular, the text in Adv.MS.72.1.8 appears to have been produced at the same time and within the same circle as some of the greatest manuscripts of this period.[223] Other great books produced during this apparent era of revival include *Leabhar Bhaile an Mhóta* ('The Book of Ballymote') and *Leabhar Uí Mhaine* ('The Book of Uí Mhaine').[224] These books brought together prose and poetry encompassing a wide range of subjects, including saga tales (such as *Táin Bó Cúailnge*), historical accounts of battles, ecclesiastical histories, genealogies, topographical material, and vernacular renditions of classical material.[225]

Carney describes how these books 'consist to a very large extent of texts composed many centuries earlier, and there is in them, apart perhaps from the Book of Fermoy, comparatively little that was contemporary'.[226] Like so many of the texts which made up these great books, the Middle Irish *Thebaid* reflects a much earlier composition (see **Chapter 2:6**), rather than contemporary material. The compilation of earlier compositions is also reflected in twelfth-century Irish manuscripts, such as *Lebor Laignech* ('The Book of Leinster') which is the subject of ongoing discussion in modern scholarship.[227]

The purpose of these medieval manuscript compilations often remains obscure; however, it is known from a scribal note by Gilla Ísa in *Leabhar Leacain* that this book was

[221] Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, pp. xxii–xxiii, with corrections on the text from Flower, *BL Cat.*, II (1926), p. 539.
[222] Carney, p. 689.
[223] Adv.MS.72.1.8 may even have once constituted part of the Yellow Book of Lecan, cols. 573–958. See Ó Concheanainn, 'Gilla Ísa Mac Fir Bhisigh', p. 170, n. 17.
[224] See Marc Caball and Kaarina Hollo, 'The Literature of Later Medieval Ireland 1200–1600: from the Normans to the Tudors', in *The Cambridge History of Irish Literature*, ed. by Margaret Kelleher and Philip O'Leary, 2 vols (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), I, pp. 77-85 (p.112).
[225] Caball and Hollo, p. 79.
[226] Carney, p. 693.
[227] See Dagmar Schülter, *History or fable? The Book of Leinster as a document of cultural memory in twelfth-century Ireland*, Studien und Texte zur Keltologie 9 (Münster: Nodus Publikationen, 2010), pp. 20–21. Schülter's work explores the question of cultural memory in the Book of Leinster, based on the presupposed theoretical framework that 'the past is not reconstructed for its own sake, but for the use of the present' (p. 20); Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, 'The literature of medieval Ireland, 800–1200: from the Vikings to the Normans', in *The Cambridge History of Irish Literature*, ed. by Kelleher and O'Leary, I, pp. 32-73 (pp. 33–38); and Abigail Burnyeat, '*Córugud* and *Compilatio* in Some Manuscripts of *Táin Bó Cúailnge*' in *Ulidia 2*, ed. by Ó hUiginn and Ó Catháin, pp. 356–67.

devised as a family heirloom: 'Orait do Mac Ḟir Bisich do scrib in lebarsa ina ṡet oirida fine da ticfa na diaid co brathr 7 e lind [Ruaid]ri I Dubda do scribad he' ('A prayer for Mac Fhirbisich, who wrote this book as a notable heirloom for all those who will come after him for ever and in the time of [Ruaird]i Ua Dubda it was written').[228] Other manuscripts appear to have been produced at the behest of a patron, although not necessarily for academic purposes, as Carney observes:

> None could be read in its entirety by its patron, and many passages would not be intelligible to the learned compilers. For the patron, whether Gaelic or Anglo-Irish, his book had two main functions: it was a type of currency and an object of beauty. It would be shown with the same pride as a wealthy owner in a later age might display a Rubens or a Rembrandt.[229]

Could the purpose of copying the Middle Irish *Thebaid* have been for it to be held as an heirloom or artwork? Carney's assessment of the scribes of *Leabhar Leacain* and *Leabhar Bhaile an Mhóta* suggests that unlike the original translators of the narrative, the fourteenth and fifteenth-century scribes may have had little or no understanding of Latin.[230] Yet, additions to the Middle Irish *Thebaid* text found in Egerton 1781 and TCD 1298 raise questions about the education of scribes and their understanding of Latin in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[231]

Unusually, Mac Parrthaláin appears to provide his readers with his motivation for including the Middle Irish *Thebaid* in the manuscript now known as Egerton 1781. He lists a series of murders and power struggles which highlight the violent conflicts over kingship during the year he wrote the book and explains:

> 7 isin aimsir cétna dobí dá espoc a n-espoicdech Cille Moire .i. Cormac mac in espuic Mégsamhradhain 7 Tomás mac Ainntriu Megbradaigh 7 gach fer dibh gá rádha gurub é fen is espoc ann.[232]
>
> And at the same time there were two bishops in the bishopric of Kilmore, that is, Cormac, son of the bishop Magauran, and Thomas son of Andrew MacBrady, each of them alleging that he himself is bishop there.

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[228] RIA, MS 23 P2, fol. 41^{r} b. On *ISOS* the folio number is fol. 32^{r} b. See also Mulchrone, *RIA Cat.*, XIII, p. 1552.
[229] Carney, p. 693. For further information on patronage during this period, see Caball and Hollo, pp. 112–13.
[230] Carney, p. 689.
[231] See Erich Poppe, 'Latin and Latin Learning in Fifteenth-century Ireland', in *Researching the Languages of Ireland*, ed. by Raymond Hickey (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2011), pp. 97–117.
[232] Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, pp. xxii–xxiii, with corrections from Flower, *BL Cat.*, II (1926), p. 539.

The scribe's words appear to be an allusion to the themes of the *Thebaid*, where Eteocles and Polynices' quarrel over the sovereignty of Thebes leads to civil war. It seems possible, therefore, that Mac Parthaláin included Statius's tale of fratricide as a type of *exemplum*, a tale with moral warning.[233] At the end of Mac Parthaláin's note he emphasises the prevalence of wars during the year in which he wrote the book, which Frederick Ahl highlights as a sign of the scribe's awareness of the relevance of the epic to his own day.[234]

From Mac Parrthaláin's note in Egerton 1781, modern scholars may also be able to glean a better idea of what the scribe viewed this text to be. Mac Parrthaláin begins his note 'Mile bliadan 7 .cccc. 7 secht mbliadna 7 cethra .xx. ais in tigerna in bliadain roscribad in lebursa 7 isin bliadain cétna tesda Ó Raighillig .i. Toirrdhelbach mac Seain' ('This book was written in the year of the age of the Lord 1487, and in the same year died O'Reilly, that is, Turlough, son of John').[235] That Mac Parrthaláin viewed this text as a *lebor* ('book') is interesting because his scribal note appears to refer only to the text of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and not to the other texts associated with his hand. Thus, it is possible to speculate that the scribe considered his copy of Middle Irish *Thebaid* as a book in itself, distinct from other texts in the manuscript. Note too, that in referring to the text as a *lebor*, Mac Parrthaláin does not mention a title for the narrative (see **Chapter 1:2**). Like Gilla Ísa in *Leabhar Leacain*, Mac Parrthaláin asks for a blessing for the writer of the book:

> Dé ar anmain inti dosgribh in lebarsa 7 dobi cogad idir Magsamradhain 7 Ó Raighailligh .i. Sean Ó Raigillig isin blaidhain cétna sin 7 cogad ele idir slicht Taidhg I Ruairc 7 reliqua.[236]
>
> And may the blessing of God rest on the soul of him that wrote this book. And there was war between Mac Samhradháin and O'Reilly, that is, John O'Reilly, in that same year; and another war between the descendants of Teige O'Rourke, etc.

Given that the scribe's reference to the war between Mac Samhradháin and O'Reilly in the same year, it seems that the blessing was for himself rather than the original author.

Mac Parrthaláin's note and description of his work as a book may follow the style of other medieval Irish scribes and translators, such as Fínghin Ó Mathghamhna. Indeed, the 'Prologue' to Ó Mathghamhna's translation of the Buke of Maundeville provided similar information; for instance, that the translation was made in Rosbrin and who the lords were

[233] Some medieval scholars viewed the *Thebaid* as an exemplum, see Battles, pp. 6–12.
[234] See Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, pp. xxii–xxiii and Ahl, pp. 2807–08.
[235] Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, pp. xxii–xxiii, with corrections from Flower, *BL Cat.*, II (1926), p. 538.
[236] Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, pp. xxii–xxiii, with corrections from Flower, *BL Cat.*, II (1926), p. 539.

over the Gaels when Ó Mathghamhna wrote it.[237] This example is particularly relevant as Mac Parrthaláin copied the text of the Buke of Maundeville, including a version of this prologue, into his section of Egerton 1781 at fols. 129^{r}–146^{v}.[238]

A later compiler of Egerton 1781 used *lebor* to describe the full volume of works when giving the contents in its final pages: '[Ag so] clar in liubairsi doreir uird .i. Toraidecht [...]' ('Here is the table of contents of this book according to order .i. The Pursuit of [...]') (fol. 154^{r}).[239] This suggests that it is was possible for medieval scribes and compilers to view both the manuscript as a book and individual texts within it as books in themselves.[240]

2.6 Dating the Middle Irish *Thebaid*

The surviving manuscripts of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* date to the late fourteenth to fifteenth centuries. The language in which the text is written, however, is older. Middle Irish is the term used for the language of the period *c*. 900–1200.[241] Calder gives the date of the original translation from the Latin as the early Middle Irish period based on the language of the text in Adv.MS.72.1.8.[242] He put forward the idea that the language could be demonstrated to be part-archaic based on what he described to be old forms of the definite article, such as 'in cluichi caintech sin' ('those funeral games') (*TnT*, 2589) and on the use of deponent verbs.[243] In his review of Calder's edition, Bergin refutes this dating and observes:

> [T]he deponents which occur are common in Late Middle Irish; most of them, forms like *tucastar*, are not found in Old Irish at all, and several are in common use at the present day. The language is simply Late Middle Irish.[244]

Thus, Calder considered that the translation came from earlier within this period, whereas Bergin was confident it was later. Few attempts have been made to fix a date for the

[237] 'The Gaelic Maundeville', ed. and trans. by Whitley Stokes, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 2 (1899), 1–63 and 226–300 (p. 2).
[238] Flower, *BL Cat.*, II (1926), p. 540.
[239] The translation here is my own.
[240] Although one should note that the scribe and compiler are not here seen as being one and the same.
[241] For further discussion about dating Midde Irish texts see Gearóid Mac Eoin, 'The dating of Middle Irish texts [Sir John Rhŷs Memorial Lecture 1981]', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 68 (1982), 109–37.
[242] Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, p. xi.
[243] Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, p. xiii. Calder gives 'caintecha'; however, Adv.MS.72.1.8 reads 'caintech'.
[244] Bergin, p. 321.

composition of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* beyond this. Modern scholars usually consider the text to be twelfth-century.[245]

2.7 The Middle Irish *Thebaid* and the *Thebaid* manuscript tradition

Calder notes that 'in the opinion of Professor Phillimore, it is not possible to say with certainty to what family of Latin MSS. that particular MS. belonged from which the translation into Gaelic was made'.[246] Although there is still little evidence to link the Irish text with a particular strand of the *Thebaid* manuscript tradition, below I gather together what research there is.

The earliest manuscript of the *Thebaid* is generally accepted to be the ninth-century Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Latin 8051, known as Puteanus (P), which according to D. E. Hill 'has a large number of readings not found elsewhere, many of which are preferable to what is offered by the other tradition, normally referred to as *ω*'.[247] Has any evidence come to light since Calder's edition was published which could link the Middle Irish *Thebaid* to either? In Michael Dewar's note on *Thebaid*, IX.120–21, he observes the problematic use of *iaculantum* ('hurling darts'), which may be a corruption of *iaculorum* ('of darts').[248] In evidence, Dewar draws attention to a reading of *iaculorum* at *Thebaid*, IX.120, in a fourteenth-century Italian manuscript, Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii. 3. 13. He also suggests that the Middle Irish translation hints at this reading (*TnT*, 3426–27).[249]

Although Dewar recognises the evidence to be inconclusive, he suggests that 'we can consider it as at least possible that the Irish translator had before him a now lost manuscript perhaps as old as or older than P and that it may have independently preserved the reading *iaculorum*'.[250] Thus, rather than connecting the Middle Irish *Thebaid* to either *ω*, or the family of P, known as π, Dewar's note implies that the exemplar used sits outside the recognised stemma. Miles draws on this concept from Dewar's research, and reflects that,

> [I]t raises the question whether the Irish scholar responsible for the eventual translation of the poem in the twelfth century could have read a text that had been inherited directly from antiquity without the intermediary of the Carolingian edition.[251]

[245] See O'Connor, 'Irish narrative literature', p. 14; Harris, pp. 11–32; and Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish Version of the *Thebaid*', p. 696.
[246] Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, p. xix.
[247] D. E. Hill, 'The Manuscript Tradition of the *Thebaid*', *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, 16, 2. (1966), 333-46 (p. 333).
[248] Michael Dewar, 'A Note on Statius, *Thebaid* 9.120f.', *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, 37, 2 (1987), 533-35 (p. 534).
[249] Dewar, p. 535.
[250] Dewar, p. 535.
[251] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 90.

Miles also suggests that Lactantius's commentary on the *Thebaid*, which was known to the Irish adaptor, could also have been transmitted to the Irish in a manuscript of the *Thebaid* in Insular script, which provided the text with parallel commentary.[252]

The *Thebaid*'s manuscript tradition has been shown by Robert Dale Sweeney to come from two manuscripts in Insular script that existed in Carolingian times, 'from one of which P was descended, and from the other *ω* was copied'.[253] There is little evidence to show that the exemplar used by the Irish originated from a copy outside the known stemma. Dedicated research might be fruitful in exploring this question further, although it is beyond the limits of this study. The presence of material from Lactantius's commentary in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, unfortunately, does not illuminate which manuscript tradition the Irish text corresponds to either, as it is known that the commentary includes variants from both P and *ω*.[254]

Meyer first drew attention to the presence of material from Lactantius's commentary in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, suggesting that 'When he [the redactor] departed from the Latin text to explain classical references he must have depended upon such an aid.'[255] As Miles highlights, there has yet to be a study exploring 'whether the translator's source was a medieval commentary which accompanied the poem and which drew on Lactantius or the continuous antique commentary itself'.[256] In Punzi's research on the *Thebaid* scholia, she demonstrates how problematic the search for a direct, linear relationship between a translation text and its source material is. Instead, Punzi explores how correspondences between the legends of Cadmus and Oedipus at the beginning of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and in *Roman de Thèbes* with a preface to the *Thebaid* transmitted in the fourteenth-century manuscript, Wrocław, BU, R. 124 (*olim* Breslau University Library, Rehdugeriana R. 124), may demonstrate the range of Statius scholia the authors of these narratives had access to.[257] Punzi argues that the preface in BU R. 124 beginning *Agenor rex Sidoniorum fuit* ('Agenor was king of Sidon'), which contained the tale of Europa and Cadmus and the myth of Oedipus, was developed from a

[252] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 90.
[253] Robert Dale Sweeney, *Prolegomena to an Edition of the Scholia to Statius* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), p. 82 and Alfred Klotz, *Thebaid* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1908), pp. lx–lxvi.
[254] A detailed discussion of the stemma of Lactantius's commentary in the context of the text of the *Thebaid* is provided in Sweeney, *Prolegomena,* pp. 76–85. See also Michael D. Reeves, 'Statius', in *Texts and Transmission: a survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. by Leighton D. Reynolds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 394–99 and Alfred Klotz, 'Die Statiusscholien', *Archiv Für Lateinische Lexicographie und Grammik,* 15 (1908), 485–525 (pp. 498–501).
[255] Previously, no evidence of Lactantius's commentary had been recognised, see Gwynn, p. 439.
[256] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, pp. 58–59, n. 44.
[257] Punzi, 7–43. Punzi uses the text from Moritz Schmidt, 'Ein Scholion zum Statius', *Philologus,* 23 (1866), 541–47. The manuscript BU R. 124 was discovered missing after the Second World War, see H. Anderson, *The Manuscripts of Statius*, I, pp. 483–84 and Sweeney, *Prolegomena*, p. 20.

combination of sources, including *accessus* material from the *Thebaid* tradition, Ovid, Lactantius, and VM II.[258] She explores the textual make-up of the preface in BU R. 124 in correlation with the histories of Cadmus and Oedipus at the outset of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and the manifestation of these tales in *Roman de Thèbes*. She steers away from Moritz Schmidt's view that the preface to BU R. 214 represented the lost argument to Lactantius's *ISTC* Book I and argues that the narrative in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* was developed from the range of exegetical material available to the medieval scholar.[259] Yet, while Punzi draws attention to the role of glosses and commentary on the *Thebaid* in the development of the medieval Irish translation, she plays down the role of Ovidian source material from the *Metamorphoses*. Consequently, Punzi appears to have overlooked how close the correlation the Cadmus myth in Ovid is to the version in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* (see **Chapter 3:3**).[260]

Both Punzi and Miles's work has focused on the possible influences of commentary tradition and lost scholia on the development of the Middle Irish translations and adaptations of classical literature, demonstrating this to be a rich area of study and, for the moment, more rewarding than seeking a direct link to the manuscript tradition. The correlation between commentary from Lactantius and additional material in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* deserves further attention and is the subject of a dedicated study in **Chapter 4**.

2.8 The *Thebaid* book divisions and the use of capitals in Adv.MS.72.1.8 and Egerton 1781

This section explores whether or not the book divisions of the *Thebaid* were followed by the medieval Irish scribes. The use of capitals in Adv.MS.72.1.8 and Egerton 1781 do not seem to indicate that the twelve book divisions of the *Thebaid* were marked out consistently by the Irish scribes.[261] There is no indication of these in the marginalia of the Irish texts either.

[258] Punzi, pp. 7–24.
[259] Punzi, pp. 14–15. See also H. Anderson, *The Manuscripts of Statius*, I, p. 484 who notes that there is no reason to make this assumption; Lowell Edmunds, 'Oedipus in the Middle Ages'. *Antike und Abendland*, 12 (1976), 140–55; and Schmidt, 541–47. For the text of *Roman de Thèbes* see *Le Roman de Thèbes, édition critique d'aprés tous les manuscrits connus*, ed. by Léopold Constans, 2 vols (Paris: F. Didot, 1890). The tale of Cadmus and Europa in *Roman de Thèbes* is provided as part of an ecphrasis in some versions of the tale, see Constans, *Le Roman de Thèbes*, II, Appendix II, ll. 9184–9224. This version of the tale is derived from the texts in Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale, Français 60, fols. 1a–41c and Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale, Français 375, fols. 36–67v.
[260] Punzi, pp. 15–18, and p. 43.
[261] The *Thebaid* book divisions are taken here from D. E. Hill, ed., *Statius. Thebaidos Liberi XII: Recensuit et cum apparatu critico et exegetico in- struxit* (Leiden: Brill, 1983). See also Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish Version of the *Thebaid*', p. 691. The capitals from TCD 1298 are not included in this short study here as I have yet to consult this manuscript.

Table 2: Use of Large Capitals in the Adv.MS.72.1.8 and Egerton 1781 text of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* corresponding to book divisions in the *Thebaid*

Thebaid	***TnT***	**Adv.MS.72.1.8**	**Egerton 1781**
Book IV	1363	fol. 9^{r} a14	fol. 98^{r} a6
Book V	1810	fol. 11^{v} b12	fol. 101^{v} b9 [mid-line capital]
Book IX	3339	fol. 21^{v} a25 [line break above]	fol. 114^{v} b19 [line break above]
Book X	3855	No text	fol. 119^{r} b3 [line break above]
Book XI	4288	fol. 24^{v} b46 [line break above]	fol. 122^{v} b4 [capital not emphaised]
Book XII	4619	fol. 26^{v} a24 [line break above]	fol. 125^{r} a23 [line break above]

In contrast, Sweeney notes these to be 'very widespread in the margins of manuscripts of the *Thebaid*'.[262] The medieval Irish scribes, however, do appear to have their own system of divisions within the text; and it is noticeable that the size and decoration of capitals differs between scribes. It is worth noting a number of obstacles which prevent us attempting to trace chapter divisions for *Thebaid* Books I, II, and III in the texts of the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. Firstly, Statius's proem was omitted and a historical prologue added in the vernacular text and thus the start does not correspond with Statius's Book I.[263] Secondly, the assembly of the gods from *Thebaid*, I.197–311, appears in the vernacular narrative at *TnT*, 575–92 after the festivities celebrating the arrival of Polynices and Tydeus at Argos end at *TnT*, 574.[264] In contrast, Statius's *Thebaid* Book I, ends with these festivities. Thirdly, lacunae in the manuscript Adv.MS.72.1.8 relating to the end of *Thebaid*, II.690–III.260 (cf. *TnT*, 1046), mean that we are without the vernacular text corresponding to the start of Book III. Despite these difficulties a short analysis of the use of capitals corresponding to *Thebaid* chapter divisions is given below.

In both Adv.MS.72.1.8 and Egerton 1781 there are instances where the use of large capitals at the beginning of a line corresponds with the book divisions of the *Thebaid*; see **Table 2**. That the scribes used large capitals to create divisions in the text of Adv.MS.72.1.8

[262] See Sweeney, *Prolegomena*, p. 21.
[263] For a comparison between the beginning of Statius's *Thebaid* and the Middle Irish *Thebaid* see **Chapter 4:3.1**.
[264] A detailed analysis of the change in narrative order is given in **Chapter 3:2**.

and Egerton 1781 is also evident from the use of line breaks above some of the lines beginning with large capitals. The use of these large capitals and line breaks, however, is not always consistent with book divisions from the *Thebaid*. In Adv.MS.72.1.8 at fol. 14^{r} a38 (*TnT*, 2190) a mid-line capital is given where a large capital at the beginning of the line might be expected to correspond with the beginning of Book VI. Further down this page a large capital appears at fol. 14^{r} a45 (*TnT*, 2195) with a line break above it. The positioning of this capital appears to demonstrate where the scribe chose to make his emphasis. There is a similar occurrence at the expected start of *Thebaid* Book VII (cf. *TnT*, 2595) where a mid-line capital is given without emphasis at fol. 16^{v} b11, but above at fol. 16^{v} b4 (*TnT*, 2589) the line begins with large capitals, and there is a line break above at b3 (*TnT*, 2589). The Egerton 1781 text appears to follow the division from Adv.MS.72.1.8, heavily emphasising the line fol. 108^{r} b25 without highlighting the capital at the beginning of fol. 108^{r} b33 where *Thebaid* Book VII begins.[265] This is also the case for the anticipated book division at *Thebaid* Book VIII. Rather than provide a large capital at fol. 19^{r} a12 (Adv.MS.72.1.8) and fol. 111^{r} b33 (Egerton 1781), where the corresponding text to *Thebaid* Book VIII starts (*TnT*, 2945), large capitals are given at fol. 19^{r} a37 (Adv.MS.72.1.8) and fol. 111^{v} a18 (Egerton 1781) (*TnT*, 2963).

Meyer linked the use of additional divisions within the Middle Irish *Thebaid* with *remscéla* ('introductory tales') used to break up Irish vernacular narratives such as *Táin Bó Cúailnge*.[266] The *Thebaid* was not the only classical epic to lose its book-based structure in reception. Poppe has highlighted how *In Cath Catharda* was divided into named episodes with opening and closing formulae rather than maintaining Lucan's book divisions.[267] In an article exploring the removal of Statius's invocations to the Muses in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* I highlight similar divisions and their relationship to headings or titles in manuscripts, known as *tituli*.[268]

The use of capitals in emphasising divisions within the texts of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* are not consistent with the book divisions of the epic poem. The sections of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* which the scribes chose to highlight using capitals in both Adv.MS.72.1.8 and Egerton 1781, however, deserves greater attention. Although no further study is attempted in

[265] Calder appears to have followed the medieval Irish scribes in creating the chapter division for *Thebaid* Book VII at this point.
[266] Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish Version of the *Thebaid*', pp. 691–92. Meyer notes the use these divisions at *TnT*, 1087, 1377, 1586, 2982, 3396–97, and 3388.
[267] Poppe, 'Lucan's *Bellum Civile*', pp. 101–04. See also Meyer, 'The Middle Irish version of the *Pharsalia*', pp. 356–57.
[268] Mariamne Briggs, 'Removing the Muses: responses to Statian subjectivity in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*', in *Crossing Borders in the Insular Middle Ages: 900-1500*, ed. by Victoria Flood and Aisling Byrne, Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe (TCNE) (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming). *Tituli* are also explored in **Chapter 1:2**, which highlights their use in naming medieval texts.

this thesis, the close relationship between these two texts would make them an excellent subject for investigating the use and development of capitals and *tituli* in late medieval reading practice.

2.9 Conclusion

The manuscripts in which the Middle Irish *Thebaid* texts and fragments have been preserved to the modern day were produced in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and may have been produced as part of a late medieval literary revival in Ireland. Research into the scribes of Adv.MS.72.1.8 and Mac Parthaláin's scribal note for Egerton 1781 highlights the patron-orientated environments in which these texts were developed. Evidence, such as the interpolation of *Scél an Mundtuirc* into the Adv.MS.72.1.8 text and its subsequent inclusion in the Egerton 1781 text, and additional material included in the Egerton 1781 and TCD 1298 texts, demonstrate that the Middle Irish *Thebaid* was not a static text in the medieval period. The lacunae in Adv.MS.72.1.8 and contrasting readings in Egerton 1781 also highlight the difficulty of reading missing text from the *Thebaid* Book II and III as having been purged by the Irish translator. Although there are unanswered questions about when additions and omissions in the text were made and by whom, it seems clear that despite the original translation having been dated to Late Middle Irish, the text was modified between its point of origin and the last known copy made, Egerton 1781. At present, there is little evidence to link the texts with any specific stemma of the *Thebaid* manuscript tradition.

The presentation of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* text in the manuscripts offers a variety of opportunities for further study which are not be undertaken in this thesis, including the exploration of cross marks in the marginalia of Adv.MS.72.1.8 and investigating the use and development of capitals and *tituli* in late medieval reading practice through their deployment in Adv.MS.72.1.8 and Egerton 1781. The fragments in TCD 1298 also warrant further study.

Chapter Three

The metamorphosis of the *Thebaid*

3.1 Introduction

The Middle Irish *Thebaid* can be seen broadly to reflect a comprehensive translation of Statius's epic poem. Compared to other Irish adaptations of classical literature, such as *Imtheachta Aeniasa* and *In Cath Catharda*, the Irish *Thebaid* is very close to the original *Thebaid* both in the sequence of events and content. However, the Latin poem was heavily cut, abbreviated and elaborated upon. Where there are significant elaborations, the Irish text yields significant evidence that the translator's source was not limited to the *Thebaid* alone. In **Chapter 2**, I highlighted Miles's research on the *Riss* which demonstrates that the tale *Scél an Mundtuirc* (*TnT*, 794–827) was not part of the original text of the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, but an addition to the text in Adv.MS.72.1.8.[269] Yet, there are numerous other additions in the Irish vernacular narrative and most of these appear to have been part of the original translation.[270]

The most extensive section of supplementary material in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* can be found at the beginning of the narrative. *Thebaid* I.1–45, which constitutes Statius's proem, an essential element to the Greek and Latin epic poetry tradition, was not translated into the Irish vernacular. In its place, the translator incorporated other material from Latin sources which transformed the beginning of the tale into a prologue, providing the historical background to the city of Thebes (*TnT*, 1–146). This prologue focuses primarily on the histories of Cadmus and Oedipus.

This chapter explores the ways in which the prologue to the Middle Irish *Thebaid* was developed. In the first section, the prologue is considered in the context of other classical adaptations in medieval Ireland. In Poppe's *A New Introduction to Imtheachta Aeniasa*, he argues that *Imtheachta Aeniasa* was 'perceived as a historical narrative rather than as a literary epic or mere entertainment'.[271] He writes that 'the inclusion of the prologue and epilogue in *Imtheachta Aeniasa* can be said to set the events of the text in their historical, or pseudo-historical, context'.[272] Building on Poppe's approach to *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, I argue that the inclusion of a prologue in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* demonstrates an interest in the epic as a historical narrative: as though the *Thebaid* provided a historical account of the war at Thebes

[269] Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', pp. 77–78 and **Chapter 2:2.2**.
[270] Additions and omissions to the text are also explored in **Chapter 4** and **Chapter 5**.
[271] Poppe, *A New Introduction*, p. 1.
[272] Poppe, *A New Introduction*, p. 8.

rather than a poetic fiction. This section also considers whether further evidence in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* indicates the historical concerns of the translator.

The second section focuses on the introductory lines to the Irish translation and the history of Cadmus, examining how the removal of Statius's proem from the narrative effects the reader's understanding of the *Thebaid*'s themes. In this section, the critical and stylistic expectations of the medieval Irish reader are explored in the translator's development of the prologue. The inclusion of the history of Cadmus in the prologue also raises the question from where the source material for it might have come. How did the medieval Irish translator adapt his source?

In the third section, the development of Oedipus's history in the prologue is explored and, as above for the history of Cadmus, the possible origins of the source material for this narrative is investigated. This includes a close study of the similarities between the VM II, 230, the myth of Oedipus, and the equivalent tale in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*.[273] Links to the manuscript tradition of the *Thebaid* and its scholia are also explored. Overall, this chapter considers how the historical prologue to the Middle Irish *Thebaid* can help modern scholars to build on their understanding of medieval Irish translation practices.

3.2 Historical interests and *ordo naturalis*

Throughout the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, there is evidence of the translator's historical interests. One may easily overlook the transition from Roman epic poetry to narrative prose in the vernacular rendition of the tale. However, as O'Connor emphasises, 'In the adaptations of Roman epic, the shift from verse to prose entailed a more explicit insistence on historical veracity.'[274] The Irish saga prose narratives are themselves now often recognised by modern scholars as demonstrating both the literary and historiographic interests of their medieval authors.[275] O'Connor writes:

> [T]o write in prose was to tell nothing but the truth, or at least appear to do so. The sagas on Irish themes exemplified this stance, for all their artistry: in taking on saga-like form, Classical adaptations were made to assume saga-like truth-value, adding an ancient Graeco-Roman dimension to the rich tapestry of Irish legendary and synthetic history.[276]

[273] VM II, 230 is located in the manuscript Rome, Vaticanus, Lat. 8743. See *Mythographi Vaticani I et II*, pp. 331–32.
[274] O'Connor, 'Irish narrative literature', p. 19.
[275] See Gregory Toner, 'The Ulster Cycle: Historiography or Fiction?', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 40 (2000), 1–20.
[276] O'Connor, 'Irish narrative literature', pp. 19–20.

The *Thebaid* is but one of the classical epic narratives adapted in medieval Ireland to gain a historical prologue. Myrick, Poppe, and Clarke all observe the inclusion of historical prologues to *Togail Troí*, *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, *In Cath Catharda*, and the Alexander-compilation.[277] Examining the adaptations of *Togail Troí*, *Merugud Uilixis*, *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, and the Alexander-compilation in context in the Book of Ballymote, Poppe observes the clear thematic relationship of this gathering.[278] He went on to interpret the prologues at the outset of *Togail Troí* and *Imtheachta Aeniasa* in this manuscript 'as one indication of the learned, and perhaps primarily historical, interests of the compilers of the Book of Ballymote in their material'.[279] Miles notes, too, the late medieval interest in gathering together classical narratives apparent in the manuscripts at RIA D iv 2 and Dublin, King's Inns, MSS 12–13.[280]

Elsewhere, Poppe has explored 'typological similarities' between the versions of pseudo-Dares' *De Excidio Troiae Historia* developed in medieval Irish, Norse, and Welsh literature.[281] He argues that by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries 'the expanded Irish texts about Troy had become part of narrative cycles about events in classical antiquity'.[282] Based on the collection of classical tales within manuscript compilations, Poppe proposes that the interest in these narratives was predominantly a historiographical one.[283] He writes:

> The cyclification of Dares's narrative in all three insular cultures under discussion indicates that the scholars responsible for the compilation of the manuscripts were not interested in the Trojan War as an isolated event or as a single historical analogue [...], but as a part of a larger historical system, either the history of the classical period, or the history of Britain.[284]

That the interest of Irish scholars in the Trojan War was part of a wider historical discourse is also evident from the way in which *Togail Troí* developed.

Helen Fulton explores this concept further in her study on the Troy story in medieval Ireland and Wales.[285] Fulton considers the ways in which *Togail Troí* might be described as

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[277] See Myrick, pp. 162–63; Poppe, *A New Introduction*, pp. 6–7; and Clarke, 'The Extended Prologue', 23–106.
[278] Poppe, *A New Introduction*, pp. 4–5.
[279] Poppe, *A New Introduction*, pp. 5–6.
[280] Brent Miles, '*Togail Troí*: The Irish Destruction of Troy on the cusp of the Renaissance', in *Fantasies of Troy: Classical Tales and the Social Imaginary in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Alan Shepard and Stephen D. Powell (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2004), pp. 81–96 (pp. 86–87).
[281] Poppe, 'The Matter of Troy', 253–99.
[282] Poppe, 'The Matter of Troy', p. 280.
[283] Poppe, 'The Matter of Troy', p. 280.
[284] Poppe, 'The Matter of Troy', p. 281. See also Erich Poppe, 'Narrative History and Cultural Memory in Medieval Ireland: some preliminary thoughts', in *Medieval Irish Perspectives on Cultural Memory*, ed. by Jan Erik Rekdal and Erich Poppe (Münster: Nodus Publikationen, 2014), pp. 135–67.
[285] Fulton, 'History and Historia', pp. 40–57

historical and historiographical as well as exploring some of the difficulties in using these terms to approach medieval Irish literature.[286] She argues that the Irish scholars who developed *Togail Troí* drew on classical models of *historia* and compares the narrative to the best-known text of Irish history, *Lebor Gabála* ('The Book of Invasions').[287] She argues that:

> In both Wales and Ireland, the Latin text of Dares Phrygius, itself a product of late-antique historiography, was remediated into genres of historiography which were already familiar and current among writers and their readers. For Ireland, that meant the Latin histories written by Jerome and Orosius, the *Historia Brittorum*, and the vernacular *Lebor Gabála*, a work which placed the Irish centrally within biblical world history and located them at the intersection of Europe and Asia, the same location as the war that toppled Troy.[288]

Fulton concludes that these vernacular versions of the Troy story are representative of a continued development of Christian historiography from late antiquity which sought to 'replace older classical narratives about Rome and its empire'.[289] Like *Lebor Gabála*, Fulton observes that that Irish adaptation of pseudo-Dares became a narrative detailing the rise and fall of great nations and their leaders.[290]

In Clarke's study on 'The Extended Prologue of *Togail Troí*: From Adam to the Wars of Troy', he also explores the idea that *Togail Troí* can be viewed in the same context of the accounts of human origins as *Lebor Gabála*.[291] Clarke demonstrates how in versions of *Togail Troí* preserved in six fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts, 'the Irish scholars were at pains to coordinate the Trojan story both with Biblical origins and with the chronology of global and Irish pseudohistory'.[292] He concludes that, 'The author of the *Brollach* ['the Prologue'] was concerned to give global context and thematic coherence to the history of the Trojan Wars.'[293] Thus, the prologues to these tales appear to have been developed in order to ensure the reader's knowledge of the historical setting of the narrative and, in particular, to explain when these events happened within the wider chronology of Greek history. Writing on *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, Poppe draws attention to the historical prologue at the outset of the narrative which summarizes the history of Troy up to its second destruction. He suggests that

[286] Fulton, 'History and Historia', p. 46. See also Poppe, 'The Matter of Troy', p. 269 and Clarke, 'An Irish Achilles', pp. 238–51.
[287] Fulton, 'History and Historia', pp. 46–52. In contrast to Miles's view that 'This is the transformation of *historia* in the direction of *fabula*', see Miles, *Heroic Saga*, pp. 102–04.
[288] Fulton, 'History and Historia', p. 56.
[289] Fulton, 'History and Historia', p. 56.
[290] Fulton, 'History and Historia', p. 57. Cf. David Anderson, 'Mythography or Historiography? The Interpretation of Theban Myths in Late Medieval Literature', *Florilegium*, 8 (1986), 113–39.
[291] Clarke, 'The Extended Prologue' p. 24.
[292] Clarke, 'The Extended Prologue', p. 26.
[293] Clarke, 'The Extended Prologue', p. 99.

this was based on either pseudo-Dares' *De Excidio Troiae Historia* or the Irish version, *Togail Troí*.[294] The purpose of this prologue, he argues, was to set 'the events of the *Aeneid* in their wider context of Greek history'.[295]

The interest in the Theban tale in medieval Europe may be partly understood for its perceived role as a precursor to the Trojan legend.[296] Chronologically, the civil war at Thebes preceded the Trojan War, and many of the descendants of the heroes from Thebes, were known to have fought at Troy. In Adv.MS.72.1.8, the Middle Irish *Thebaid* was placed at the beginning of a pre-existing manuscript containing a version of *Togail Troí* (fols. 29^{r}–37^{v}).[297] This act perhaps suggests that the medieval compiler perceived the narratives as thematically related or even that they formed a chronological sequence.[298]

The text of Middle Irish *Thebaid* in Egerton 1781 and the manuscript fragments from TCD 1298 also reveal evidence that the narrative was viewed by late medieval scholars as a precursor to *Togail Troí*. After the final battle in the Irish *Thebaid*, an overview of the post-war state of affairs was added. This includes an explanation that Argia returned to Larissa and eventually died of grief for Polynices (*TnT*, 4909–13), followed by a note that her son, Thersander, took the sovereignty of Thebes and was one of the Greek kings present at the siege of Troy (cf. **Chapter 2:3.2**):

> *Et rogabh a mac .i. Tesanndrus mac Poliniceis righi na Tiabanda, conadh e in sechtmad*[299] *righi xx rouai ag togail Troe maraon re Grecaibh in Tesandorus sin.* (*TnT*, 4913–15)
>
> *And her son, that is, Thersander, son of Polynices, took over the kingship of the Thebans, so that that Thersander was the twenty-seventh king along with the Greeks that were present at the siege of Troy.*

By providing this information, it seems likely that the Irish author was, like the author of *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, encouraging the reader to view the Theban conflict as part of a wider picture of Greek history. One wonders if the late medieval author of the note may also have been demonstrating his own familiarity with *Togail Troí* by including this epilogue. By

[294] Poppe, *A New Introduction*, p. 6.
[295] Poppe, *A New Introduction*, p. 7.
[296] Briggs, 'Removing the Muses', forthcoming.
[297] See **Chapter 2:2.1**.
[298] As Poppe argues, this appears to be the case for the Irish classical adaptations which appear in the Book of Ballymote, see Poppe, *A New Introduction*, p. 5.
[299] Calder translates 'one of the twenty-seven kings', which I change to 'the twenty-seventh king'. Calder provides 'sechtmad' to resolve a mistake reading 'vii ind' at Egerton 1781, fol. 128^{r} a6. His correction appears to be based on the text in TCD 1298 which reads, 'Et rogabh a mac .i Tesandarius mac Poliniceis righe na Thiuanta conadh he an .uii. mad [righ xx] ri uai ac toghail Troe maraien re Gre[gaibh] an Teissandarus sin', see Meyer, 'The T.C.D. fragments', p. 132.

providing this detail, the author ensured that the end of the Theban conflict looked forward to the Trojan War, creating a neat chronological link in the text. The author of the Irish *Thebaid* was not alone in providing an epilogue of this sort as part of a classical narrative in the vernacular; Poppe notes the inclusion of a short historical epilogue at the end of *Imtheachta Aeniasa* at lines 3206–15, which 'introduces a view of historical linearity and dynastic continuity'.[300]

There is evidence in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* that this interest in historical linearity and dynastic continuity was not limited to the Trojan War. In both the Adv.MS.72.1.8 and Egerton 1781 texts of the narrative, a reference to the pregnancy of Hippolyte, queen of the Amazons, based on *Thebaid*, XII.635–36, appears:

> Et dono dorachad Ipoleiti rigan na Cichloiscthi isin tinol sin mina thoirmisced Teiss uimpi, uair fá torrach uad fein í. (*TnT*, 4799–4802)
>
> And also Hippolyte, queen of the Amazons [lit. the burnt-breasted ones], would have gone in that gathering, had Theseus not prevented her; for she was pregnant by himself.

In the Egerton 1781 text, the lineage of her son Uirbius follows:

> *Et is e toirrches rouái aici andsin Uirbius*[301] *mac Ipolite, 7 is ris atberur Uirbius Uirbibens hís,*[302] *7 niho athair .i. o Teis mac Eig sloinnter in mac sin acht o m[h]athair .i. Ipolite. Et is e tainic a sochraidi Thuirn mic Duin i n-aigid Ainiasa ar cathugud na hEdaille 7 na Rutulla. Ar ba do Grecaib bunadh-cinel Tuirn, conadh aire sin tanic Uirbius mac Teis 7 Ipolite a cathugud na Rutalla a n-aigid Troighinach 7 Ainiasa 7 do chumgnam le Rutallaibh. Et is e sin tindrem genemna Uirbius 7 is e roatnuighsit na die fá dó iarna marbad tre fochann a lesmathar*. (*TnT*, 4801–10)
>
> *And the pregnancy she had then was Uirbius son of Hippolyte, and he is called Uirbius Uirbibens afterwards. And it is not from his father, that is, from Theseus son of Aegeus, that that boy was named but from his mother, that is, Hippolyte. And it was he that came in the retinue of Turnus, son of Daunus, against Aeneas, to fight for Italy and Rutulia. For Turnus's original ancestry was of the Greeks, so that it is for that reason that Uirbius, son of Theseus and Hippolyte, came to fight for the Rutulians against the Trojans and Aeneas, and to help the Rutulians. And that is the beginning of Uirbius' genealogy; and he it was whom the gods twice revived after he had been killed by means of his stepmother.*

[300] Poppe, *A New Introduction*, p. 7.
[301] Calder translates *Uirbius* as 'Urbius'; *Uirbius* is the correct Latin name so I correct to 'Uirbius' throughout the passage.
[302] Calder translates 'subsequently'; I change to 'afterwards', *eDIL* s.v. 4 *í*, *hí* (a). Gwyn sensibly suggests that the *hís* represents a corruption of the original Latin, see Gwyn, p. 438.

As this passage does not appear in Adv.MS.72.1.8., is seems possible that this was a fifteenth century addition to the text. Although Statius did mention Hippolyte's pregnancy at *Thebaid*, XII. 635–38, he made no reference to Uirbius. While no direct source for this addition has been identified to date, Gwyn notes in his review of Calder's edition that:

> Here *Virbius Virbibenshis* is a corruption of *Vibius vir vivens bis*, an etymologising interpretation of the name Virbius which is found in a gloss in the *Corpus Glossarum Latinarum*, v. 624, in a somewhat corrupt form: Virbium uel uirum bis est uiuens. The same etymology is implied in a scholium on Persius, vi. 56, ubi Virbius colitur [...] quod bis in uitam prolatus est.[303]

There are other sources which follow Statius's genealogy for Hippolyte's child: Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 251, identifies Virbius as the son of Theseus, as does Servius at *Aeneid*, VII.761, and VM I, 46. The brief allusion to Hippolyte's pregnancy in the *Thebaid* enabled the Irish author to make a connection to the war between the Trojans and the Rutulians, as told in Virgil's *Aeneid* and retold in *Imtheachta Aeniasa*.[304] Somewhat intriguingly, Uirbius's genealogy in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* differs to that provided by Virgil's *Aeneid*, VII.761–62 and *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, 1770, where Uirbius is identified as Hippolytus's son. The author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* highlights that Virbius fought in Turnus's army, because Turnus's lineage, like Uirbius's, was Greek. Thus, the reader is encouraged to view the conflict between Rutulians and Trojans in Italy within the wider context of Greek history. Like the note on Thersander at *TnT* 4913–15, the commentary on Uirbius's role in the Italian war may also demonstrate the Irish author's knowledge of associated narratives.

An interest in the historical order of events also appears to be reflected in the narrative structure of the adapted tales. For instance, in *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, narrative events were reordered by the Irish adaptor, who partially restored events to the *ordo naturalis*, the natural, or chronological, order of things, from Virgil's *ordo artificilias*.[305] **Table 3** and **Table 4** demonstrate that the *Thebaid* was also subject to reordering in the Irish vernacular.

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[303] Gwyn, p. 438. See also *Corpus glossariorum latinorum a Gustavo Loewe inchoatum. V: Placidus Liber Glossarum. Glossae Reliqua*, ed. by Georg Goetz (Leipzig: Teubner, 1894), p. 624 and Persius, *Satirarum Liber, cum scholiis antiquis*, ed. by Otto Jahn (Leipzig, 1843; repr. Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1967), pp. 347–48.

[304] See also **Chapter 2:3.2**.

[305] Poppe noted that this partial restoration to a natural order resulted in some narrative inconsistencies due to the retention of Aeneas's account of the sack of Troy in the order that Virgil gave it in the *Aeneid*. Aeneas's account then contradicts the account in *Imtheachta Aeniasa'*s prologue. Poppe, *A New Introduction*, pp. 6–7.

Table 3: Comparison of the sequence of events at *Thebaid*, I.164-II.720 and *TnT*, 215-95

Thebaid		***TnT***	
I.164-70	Division of rule with narratorial apostrophe directed at Polynices.	215-24	Division of rule by lot for alternative years.
I.171-96	The Theban's complaint.	224-32	The Theban's complaint.
I.197-213	Assembly of the gods.	233-55	Polynices in exile.
I.214-48	Jupiter's decree to punish mankind for its crimes.	255-329	Polynices' journey to Argos.
I.248-83	Juno's reproach to Jupiter.	330-44	Apollo's prophecy to Adrastus.
I.283-302	Jupiter's reply and order to Mercury to stir Laius from the underworld.	345-405	Exile of Tydeus and the fight between Polynices and Tydeus over sleeping space.
I.303-11	Mercury's flight to the underworld.	406-45	Arrival of Adrastus, who ends the fight and leads Polynices and Tydeus into the palace.
I.312-35	Polynices in exile.	445-54	Apollo's prophecy to Adrastus revealed.
I.336-89	Polynices' journey to Argos.	455-554	Feast at Argos renewed; introduction to Adrastus's daughters; Adrastus explains the rites of Apollo at Argos.
I.390-400	Apollo's prophecy to Adrastus.	554-72	Polynices provides his lineage and Adrastus reassures him.
I.401-27	Exile of Tydeus and the fight between Polynices and Tydeus over sleeping space.	572-74	Adrastus brings to an end the festivities with the request that prayers be offered to Apollo.
I.428-81	Arrival of Adrastus, who ends the fight and Polynices and Tydeus are led into the palace.	575-78	Assembly of the gods.
I.482-97	Revelation of Apollo's prophecy to Adrastus.	578-79	Jupiter's decree to punish the Thebans and the Greeks for the evils they had done.
I.497-668	Apollo's feast at Argos renewed; introduction to Adrastus's daughters; Adrastus explains the rites of Apollo at Argos.	579-84	Explanation that Juno resists Jupiter's counsel.
I.669-95	Polynices provides his lineage and Adrastus reassures him.	579-84	Jupiter orders Mercury to hell in order to raise Laius and enflame anger between the brothers.
I.696-720	Adrastus's prayer to Apollo.	584-92	Mercury prepares for his flight to the underworld with his magic wand and goes down to Tartarus.
II.1-16	Mercury retrieves Laius from the shades using his wand.	592-95	Mercury retrieves Laius from the shades using his wand.

Table 4: Comparison of the sequence of events at *Thebaid*, X.734-836 and *TnT*, 4180-4220

Thebaid		*TnT*	
X.734-37	Menoeceus leaves his father in uncertainty whilst he commits himself to the will of the Parcae.	4180-82	Menoeceus leaves his father and Creon goes to look for his other son.
X.738-55	Capaneus is meanwhile driving the host forward to the battlefield. He seems to be filling the places of the other heroes lost. He is too fearsome to go against in battle.	4183-85	Menoeceus reaches the city walls and speaks out.
X.756-61	Menoeceus takes off his helmet and looks out at the battlefield preparing for death.	4185-89	Menoeceus prays to the gods for Theban victory.
X.762-73	Menoeceus prays to the High Ones and offers himself as a sacrifice.	4189-91	Menoeceus kills himself with his sword so that his blood rushes over the walls of Thebes.
X.774-82	Menoeceus kills himself with his sword and throws himself off the walls at the same time. His spirit rises to Jupiter.	4191-94	The Thebans fetch his body from outside the city. They then lament him before returning to battle.
X.783-91	Menoeceus is carried back into Thebes. His body is revered before the men go back to battle.	4195-99	Menoeceus's mother laments her son's death.
X.791-814	Creon cries over his son's death and Menoeceus's mother laments her son's death.	4199-4201	Menoeceus's mother is led away by her people to her bed-chamber.
X.815-26	Menoeceus's mother is led away by her companions.	4202-17	Capaneus is outside the city urging on the Greeks. He throws huge stones, which destroy the towers of the city. Capaneus is indifferent to who he kills and no one wants to fight him.
X. 27-36	Narrator interrupts the story to say that he can no longer sing in praise, as he must relate the death of Capaneus. Invocation to all the Muses.	4218-20	Note that no skilful or knowledgeable man could relate the prowess of the man.

Table 5: Outline to the beginning of the *Thebaid*, I.1-45 and *TnT*, 1-146

Thebaid	**The Middle Irish *Thebaid***
(1) Invocation to the Muses and definition of the *limes carminis* (I.1-17). (2) *Recusatio* and praise to Domitian (I.17-33). (3) Programme of the whole epic including call to the Muse Clio (I.33-45).	(1) A short introduction into the genealogy of the Theban kings directly involved in the narrative (*TnT*, 1-7). (2) The intent of the classical author and Cadmus's foundation of Thebes (*TnT*, 8-82). (3) Oedipus's history (*TnT*, 82-139). (4) Summary of Polynices and Eteocles's quarrel (*TnT*, 140-46).

Table 3 shows that in *Thebaid* Book I the assembly of the gods and Mercury's departure to the Underworld (I.197–311) takes place after the Theban's complaint (I.171–96) and before Polynices' journey into exile (I.312–35). In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, however, the assembly of the gods takes place after the festivities celebrating the arrival of Polynices and Tydeus at Argos, which ends at *TnT*, 574. This resequencing ensured that the medieval reader progressed directly from the concerns of divided kingship to Polynices' plight in exile uninterrupted by the assembly of the gods. The assembly of the gods then begins at *TnT*, 575, ending, as it does in the *Thebaid*, with Mercury's departure to the Underworld at *TnT*, 592.

This textual move brought the assembly of the gods and the outset of Mercury's journey into chronological order with the second part of Mercury's expedition at lines 592–55. In the *Thebaid*, Mercury's arrival in the Underworld marked the start of Book II, after Statius had put almost four hundred lines of action between Mercury's departure from the heavens and his arrival in the Underworld; in contrast, the Irish author brought together these sections so that Mercury's journey was read as a continuous event.

In the Middle Irish text corresponding to *Thebaid* X, further evidence of the translator reordering events can be seen. At *Thebaid* X.628–826 Statius detailed the suicide of Creon's son, Menoeceus, who sacrifices himself after the Fury Manto tells him that his death will secure a Theban victory. Statius interrupted this narrative at X.738–55, to provide a description of Capaneus on the battlefield, driving the Argive host forward, and creating a sense of urgency as to whether or not Menoeceus will follow Manto's advice. The imagery of Capaneus on the battlefield here draws the reader's attention to the contrast between Menoeceus's character and that of Capaneus.[306] Indeed, Menoeceus does commit suicide: falling upon his sword so that his blood rushes over the walls of Thebes (X.774–82). The following passages portray the removal of his body from where it fell outside the walls of Thebes (X.783–91), his father's tears and his mother's lament (X.791–814), and a depiction of his mother's grief as she is led away by her companions (X.815–26). **Table 4** shows the details of this section in both the *Thebaid* and the Middle Irish translation.

From **Table 4**, the Irish translator can be seen to have moved the passage describing Capaneus bearing down on the walls of Thebes from just before the events leading up to Menoeceus's suicide, to just after Menoeceus's mother is led away by her companions (*TnT*, 4202–17). As a result, the sequence of events running up to Menoeceus's suicide were left uninterrupted and the action involving Capaneus's *aristeia* ran consecutively. These acts of

[306] See Pramit Chaudhuri, *The War with God: Theomachy in Roman Imperial Poetry* (Oxford: OUP, 2014), p. 261 n. 12; Randall T. Ganiban, *Statius and Virgil: The Thebaid and the Reinterpretation of the Aeneid* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), pp. 136–48.

reordering appear to demonstrate the Irish translator's desire to create a more natural order to the sequence of events portrayed in the *Thebaid*. He may have also been motivated to rework the narrative in this way to develop chronological simplification for his audience, who consequently, did not have to move from one character to another and back again to keep apace of the action. Therefore, rather than retaining the dramatic sequence of action laid out by Statius, the adaptor's concern appears to have been for chronological accuracy and simplicity.

In reception, therefore, classical epic narratives can be seen to have been adapted by medieval Irish authors in accordance with their historical interests. Where the narrative sequence of events from Latin epics reflected an *ordo artificilias*, such as the examples from the *Thebaid* cited above, the adaptor felt free to rework these passages into *ordo naturalis*. Evidence from the manuscript compilations in which the classical narratives were placed in the later Middle Ages also reveal the historical interests of their compilers. Thus, the historical concerns of medieval Irish scholars can be found both within the make-up of narratives themselves and through their compilation.

3.3 From proem to prologue

3.3.1 'Original beginnings'

Having demonstrated how the Irish author re-sequenced passages in *Thebaid* Book I and X to create an *ordo naturalis* to the vernacular translation, in this section I investigate more closely the development of the historical prologue at the outset to the narrative.[307] In establishing the prologue to the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, the Irish translator chose not to provide Statius's proem. The restructuring which results from this is shown in **Table 5**, where using David Vessey's outline to the *Thebaid*'s proem, it is possible to see that the first 45 lines of the epic can be divided into three distinguishable parts.[308]

In contrast to the beginning of Statius's *Thebaid*, the Irish version has a longer introduction to the tale. The translator provided the reader with a series of explanatory narratives, creating an account of the history of Thebes, which focuses on Cadmus's foundation of the city and the life of Oedipus, before the tale takes up the original poem at

[307] Elements of this discussion have been developed from Briggs, 'Removing the Muses', forthcoming.
[308] David Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid* (Cambridge: CUP, 1973), p. 60. The outline for the Middle Irish *Thebaid* is my own. The evidence for parts (1) and (2) of the Middle Irish prologue is reliant on the Egerton 1781 text, see **Chapter 2:2.2** for details.

Thebaid, I.46.[309] These narratives are what constitute the historical prologue. As these are extensive additions, it raises the question where the translator drew his source material from.

The rape of Europa and Cadmus's tale, which features at the outset of the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, are both alluded to in Statius's proem (*Thebaid*, I.4–9 and I.15–16) and are elucidated upon in Lactantius's commentary at *ISTC*, I.16–28 and I.74–75. Descriptive accounts of the tales appear in the Late Antique prose summaries of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, known as the *Narrationes* (see III. fab 1).[310] Punzi briefly observes that elements of the Europa and Cadmus myths known to the Irish and Old French vernacular authors are also found in VM II's accounts.[311] Abbreviated versions of the story of Europa and Jupiter and the story of Agenor and Cadmus can be found in the Carolingian works of both VM I, 145 and 146, and VM II, 96, 97, and 98. The myth of Oedipus can also be found in VM II, 230, which H. Anderson identifies as the source of the Oedipus plot summaries in the *Thebaid* manuscript tradition.[312] These summaries begin with the incipit *Laius rex Thebanorum* ('Laius king of Thebes') or similar.

Punzi is not alone in looking to the Vatican Mythographers for evidence of what mythological material was known to medieval Irish scholars. In Miles's discussion of whether or not mythological handbooks like those of Vatican Mythographers were consulted for *Togail Troí*, he concludes that: 'The First Vatican Mythographer is an invaluable witness to what a medieval scholar could collect of classical mythology from the allusive accounts of Virgil, Statius and Ovid, and from the antique commentaries of the same.'[313] As discussed in **Chapter 2:7**, Punzi encourages scholars to look to the manuscripts of the *Thebaid* and its glosses for evidence of the additional material which appears in these vernacular renditions, but to be cautious of assuming direct borrowings between the Latin sources and the medieval vernacular adaptations.[314] Using the example of the mythological prefaces on Cadmus and Oedipus in the manuscript BU R. 124, she argues that the variations in the vernacular were drawn from scholia on the epic, which was transmitted in the manuscripts, thus enabling medieval authors to expand upon Statius's narrative.[315] Like Punzi, Miles highlights that the Irish narratives were not necessarily drawn from direct borrowings of the Carolingian sources and even speculated

[309] See Harris, p. 71; and Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish Version of the *Thebaid*', p. 691.
[310] *P. Ovidi Nasonis. Metamorphoseon Libri XV: Lactanti Placidi qui dicitur narrationes fabularum Ovidianarum*, ed. by Hugo Magnus (New York: Arno Press, 1979), pp. 642–43. See also Alan Cameron, *Greek Mythography of the Roman World* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), p. 6.
[311] Punzi, pp. 17, 24, 33, 38.
[312] H. Anderson, *Manuscripts*, III, p. 10. See also **Chapter 2:4:1**.
[313] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, pp. 89–94.
[314] Punzi, pp. 28–33.
[315] Punzi, p. 13.

that the Irish could have developed their own mythological compilations.[316] There is additional evidence to support Punzi's research. At least two other *Thebaid* manuscripts, both thirteenth-century, are known to have mythological prefaces including both the Cadmus and Oedipus myth.[317] Another manuscript, dated to the eleventh century, is known to have had some form of mythological preface relating to the myth of Agenor and Cadmus.[318]

Further support for this approach can be found in Poppe's study of the structure and sources of *In Cath Catharda*. Here, he examines the introductory material to this adaptation which is not found in Lucan's *Bellum Civile* as a product of the medieval tradition of *accessus ad auctores*.[319] The first part of the introduction to *In Cath Catharda* provides an account of the empires of the world and the second 'proceeds to a survey of Roman history, forms of Roman government, and the specific historical background for Lucan's narrative'.[320] This reflects the interest of medieval Irish scholars in creating historical prologues to the classical epics they adapted. Poppe argues that this narrative follows 'the tradition of an extended *summa historiae* and specifically a type of text which is also reflected in the Old Icelandic *Rómverja saga*'.[321] After comparing the Irish and Icelandic narratives closely, Poppe concludes that he thinks it:

> [L]ikely that the manuscript of Lucan used by the Irish redactor contained, besides scholia, an extended *summa historiae* similar to the one attested in Scandinavia, which was then prefaced with an account of the empires of the ancient world, derived from the Irish learned tradition - which of course was itself based on (post-) classical materials.[322]

Overall, Poppe's study demonstrates the range of learned traditions which the Irish redactor(s) drew on and highlighted that they may have had used *accessus* material and scholia from a manuscript of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.[323]

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[316] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, pp. 92–93.
[317] Lieden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, BPL 136 K, fols. 15$^{r–v}$ and Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, C.97, fol. 1^{v}.
[318] Lieden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, GRO 70, fol. 1^{v}. Unfortunately, the poor legibility of the first page of the folio leaves us in ignorance of its extent and whether or not the myth of Oedipus was also covered. At present research on these prefaces is sadly lacking, although a brief overview of each can be found in H. Anderson, *Manuscripts*, I, pp. 160–62, pp. 169–70, and pp. 364–65.
[319] Poppe, 'Lucan's *Bellum Civile*', p. 107.
[320] Poppe, 'Lucan's *Bellum Civile*', p. 107.
[321] Poppe, 'Lucan's *Bellum Civile*', p. 107.
[322] Poppe, 'Lucan's *Bellum Civile*', p. 118.
[323] Poppe, 'Lucan's *Bellum Civile*', pp.119–20.

Table 6: Correspondences between Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, II.843-III.137 and IV.564-602 and *TnT*, 12-82

Metamorphoses		***TnT***	
II.843-75	Tale of Jupiter's seduction and abduction of Agenor's daughter while disguised as a bull.	12-18	Description of how Jupiter fell in love with Europa and fetched her off in the shape of a bull.
III.2-5	Agenor sends his son Cadmus to look for Europa.	19-24	Agenor reacts angrily to Europa's disappearance and sends his son to look for her.
III.6-8	Cadmus roams the world in vain and becomes an exile.	24-30	Cadmus searches for Europa in vain.
III.8-13	Cadmus consults the oracle of Phoebus. Phoebus tells Cadmus to follow a heifer and build his city walls where she lies down.	31-42	Cadmus goes to the temple of Apollo to ask where Europa is. Apollo's prophecy of the finding of the heifer and the founding of Thebes.
III.14-25	Cadmus follows these instructions and meets a heifer outside. He follows her until she lays down.		
III.26-31	Cadmus plans to sacrifice to Jupiter and sends an attendant to get water. He finds a cave in a grove with a well in its midst.	43-47	Cadmus develops a thirst and a messenger is sent to a cave to bring water from a well there.
III.31-49	There is a serpent sacred to Mars in the cave. Description of the serpent. The serpent kills the attendants.	47-57	The messenger is killed by a venomous serpent with four heads. Cadmus sends another servant to bring him water. Fifty servants are killed in this way.
III.50-94	Cadmus goes to find his companions. In the grove he discovers the corpses and throws a huge stone at the serpent. It does not kill the serpent so he goes after it with a javelin. They fight until the serpent is killed.	57-66	Cadmus dons his armour and goes up against the serpent. They fight and Cadmus kills the serpent.
III.95-114	Pallas tells Cadmus to plough the earth and plant the serpent's teeth. He follows her advice and warriors grow up from the ground.	66-69	Cadmus consults Apollo at the temple and the gods give him new instructions. He plants the serpent's teeth and men grow from them.
III.115-30	The warriors slay each other, all save five men, including Echion.	70-75	The men kill each other save five of them. Thebes is built by these men.
III.131-37	Thebes stands completed, Cadmus is a happy man. He takes the daughter of Venus and Mars as his bride. Warning that no man is counted happy until his death.	76-78	Cadmus rules Thebes where he lives prosperously and is a happy man. Warning that misfortune found him in the end.
IV. 564-602	The metamorphoses of Cadmus and his wife into serpents.	78-82	Cadmus and his wife are turned into serpent-shapes for seven years. They are turned back and all the Theban kings come from his seed including Laius and Oedipus.

The history of Cadmus related in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* may help build on our understanding of the source material available to medieval Irish scholars through the manuscript tradition. As **Table 6** demonstrates, the Middle Irish version of the tale corresponds closely with the version of the myth told by Ovid in *Metamorphoses*, II.842–75 to III.2–130.[324] In contrast, the mythological material in BU R. 124 only briefly covers these episodes.[325] The extent to which Cadmus's foundation of Thebes is included at the outset to the Irish *Thebaid* appears to be unique. The author of the *Roman de Thèbes* began instead with the history of Oedipus (ll. 33–520); and later medieval adaptors provided only a brief overview of it, as demonstrated in Lydgate's *The Siege of Thebes* (ll. 286–327).[326] This raises the question of whether the Irish translator had an abbreviated version of the tale through a mythological preface in his exemplar and developed it using Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or if a fuller version of this history, based on the *Metamorphoses*, was transmitted in some form with the manuscript of the *Thebaid*? It is unlikely that this question will ever be answered with any certainty, but it does raise the opportunity to explore the make-up of this narrative in the Irish vernacular.[327]

The possibility that the Irish translator may have known the Cadmus legend through a mythological preface in his exemplar cannot be ruled out. In the third section of this chapter, this concept is pursued further, exploring how the translator may have developed the history of Oedipus from a mythological preface and scholia transmitted through the *Thebaid* manuscript tradition. For now, the introductory material to the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, including the history of Cadmus, will be discussed and the medieval critical techniques used by the Irish translator will be considered. This section will also examine whether Statius's epic themes remain at all visible in the first part of the Middle Irish *Thebaid*'s historical prologue, or, whether they were entirely eradicated through the removal of the *Thebaid*'s proem. Statius's proem began with the poet outlining the *Thebaid*'s subject matter, declaring:

> Fraternas acies alternaque regna profanis
> decertata odiis sontesque evolvere Thebas
> Pierius menti calor incidit. (*Thebaid*, I.1–3)
>
> Pierian fire falls upon my soul: to unfold fraternal warfare, and alternate reigns fought for in unnatural hate, and guilty Thebes.

[324] Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Volume I: Books 1–8*, ed. and trans. by Frank Justus Miller and revised by G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 42, 2nd edn (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984).
[325] Schmidt, p. 543.
[326] John Lydgate, *The Siege of Thebes*, ed. by Robert R. Edwards (Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001).
[327] Based on Ovidian material in the *Riss*, Miles argues strongly that the Irish author of the *Riss* had Ovid's poem before him, see Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', p. 75.

In setting out his intentions, the poet draws on the violence in the imagery of 'fraternas acies' ('fraternal battle lines') (*Thebaid*, I.1). Statius draws on the idea that Thebes itself is *sons* ('guilty'), thus creating a sense of inherent criminality among its people. Vessey argues that in doing so, Statius brings the poem 'close to the tradition of Lucan and separates it from that of Virgil. The theme is one of crime not glory, of unnatural strife not noble heroism'.[328] The poet creates a sense of reluctance in relaying the story, the inspiration of which has fallen on his soul direct from the Muses (I.3), and he asks them to command him where to begin (I.3–4). Claiming to be dependent on the will of the Muses, Statius deliberately rejects other poetic subjects in the history of Thebes, for instance the rape of Europa and the founding of the city (I.4–16). The poet settles solemnly on the 'Oedipodae confusa domus' ('the troubled house of Oedipus') (I.17), leaving behind those 'gemitus et prospera Cadmi' ('sorrows and happy days of Cadmus') (I.15), which imply their own difficulties. Gianpiero Rosati observes that the subject and themes seem to have been chosen by the Muses and imposed upon the poet, who claims to take a passive role in the creation of his epic poem.[329] However, Rosati warns that readers should be cautious of accepting Statius's proclaimed role as reluctant storyteller: he obviously already has a clear picture of the epic in mind.[330]

The proem progresses into a *recusatio*, explaining that the poet does 'not dare' (*nec ausim*, *Thebaid*, I.18) to write about Domitian's campaigns in Hister and Dacia or the fighting on the Capitol in AD 69. Statius then addresses Domitian directly, saying that 'cum Pierio tua fortior oestro | facta canam' ('A time will come when stronger in Pierian frenzy I shall sing your deeds') (I.32–33); he then repeats his choice of subject matter and elaborates on the extent of the epic (I.33–40). The poet proceeds to invoke the Muse Clio to assist in calling forth the heroes (I.41–45), before situating the start of the action with Oedipus and his prayer to Tisiphone (I.46–87). By restating the subject matter of the epic again towards the close of the proem Statius gives no doubt as to what his overall theme is:

> nunc tendo chelyn; satis arma referre
> Aonia et geminis sceptrum exitiale tyrannis
> nec furiis post fata modum flammasque rebelles
> seditione rogi tumulisque carentia regum
> funera et egestas alternis mortibus urbes.
> (*Thebaid*, I.33–40)

[328] Vessey, p. 61.
[329] Gianpiero Rosati, 'Muse and Power in the Poetry of Statius', in *Cultivating the Muse: Struggles for Power and Inspiration in Classical Literature*, ed. by Efrossini Spentzou and Don Fowler (Oxford: OUP, 2002), pp. 229–51 (p. 230).
[330] Rosati, p. 232.

> For now I but tune my lyre; enough to recount Aonian arms, sceptre fatal to tyrants twain, fury outlasting death and flames renewing battle in the strife of the pyre, kings' bodies lacking burial, and cities emptied by mutual slaughter.

The reference to 'arma Aonia' ('Aonian arms') emphasises the conflict between the brothers. The passage highlights the *ira* ('anger') and *furor* ('madness') behind the war at Thebes, and leaves the reader in no doubt that this is, as Vessey argues, above all an epic of emotion, with the most important emotion portrayed being *ira*.[331] Statius's *ira* is that which Seneca and the Stoics perceived as 'a demonic force which maddens and destroys'.[332] Thus, in this epic, *ira* is the force behind a *furor* so powerful that it will outlast death and even renew *seditio* ('civil strife') as the brothers' bodies burn on the funeral pyre (*Thebaid*, XII.429–36). As Randall Ganiban observes, 'The *Thebaid* continually reminds us of the terrible elements of the fraternal war both by looking forward to them and by making us recall their literary pasts.'[333] The poet was, therefore, playing heavily on the reader's knowledge of Theban myth.

In juxtaposition to Statius's playful proem, which presumes the reader's knowledge of the Theban myth from the outset, the author of the Irish *Thebaid* developed the historical prologue in order to situate the tale. The short introduction at the beginning of the text places Thebes and its chronological sovereigns, Laius, Oedipus, Polynices and Eteocles, at the centre of the narrative:

> *Aroile righ uasal oirmuidnech onorach rogabh forlamhus 7 ferandus ar an ardcathraigh n-aibind n-alaind .i. Teibh isin nGreic dar-ua comainm Laius, 7 is do-sidhe robo mac Eidhip, 7 is on Eidhip sin rocindset na da mac aildi oiregda .i. Polinices 7 Etioccles, 7 is iat na braithri sin romarb a chele isin cathugud mor na*[4] *Tiabhanta 7 na nGrec ic cosnum righe na hardcathrach na Teibhe do cechtar leithi*. (*TnT*, 1–7)
>
> *A certain noble, revered, honourable king, had assumed sway and proprietorship over the pleasant and splendid capital city, that is, Thebes in Greece, whose name was Laius and who had a son, Oedipus, and it is from that Oedipus came the two fair distinguished sons, that is, Polynices and Eteocles. They are those brothers that killed one another in the great war of the Thebans and the Greeks, as they contended on each side for the kingship of the capital city of Thebes.*

Here, Statius's subjective voice setting out his themes at the command of the Muses has been removed.[334] The Irish author first introduces Laius as a king 'uasal oirmuidnech onorach' ('noble, revered, honourable) and it is then explained that he held sway of the city of Thebes

[331] Vessey, p. 58.
[332] Vessey, p. 58.
[333] Ganiban, p. 48.
[334] Briggs, 'Removing the Muses'.

in Greece. It follows that Oedipus is given as the son of Laius, and then Polynices and Eteocles are presented as his 'da mac aildi oiregda' ('two fair distinguished sons'). The sense of the city of Thebes being *sons* ('guilty'), which Statius carefully stressed, is not conveyed. This contrasts with other medieval adaptations of the Theban legend, which Battles argues can each be seen to constitute 'some attempt to understand the ancient Thebans as a cursed race, as a people with a hereditary propensity for violent and distorted behaviour'.[335]

Yet, the Middle Irish *Thebaid* does not present an unproblematic depiction of the Theban line. Although this introduction to the Theban kings does commend them, their portrayal throughout the prologue and the rest of the narrative often contradicts the noble characteristics bestowed upon them here. The apparently distinguished characters of the Thebans are instantly called into question by the explanation that Polynices and Eteocles are those brothers '*romarb a chele*' ('*that killed one another*') (*TnT*, 5) in the great war over the *ríge* ('kingship') of Thebes: their history is one of *fingal* ('kin-murder').[336]

The upcoming war between the Greeks and Thebans is also identified in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* as *fingal* at *TnT*, 1363–64, a description of the conflict which does not derive from the corresponding text in Statius's epic (cf. *Thebaid*, IV.1–12). When Eteocles and Polynices finally engage in one-to-one combat, Adrastus begs the Thebans and the Greeks to prevent the men from committing *fingal* (*TnT*, 4465–67). The *airecht* ('host') of men watching the brothers fight is described by the Irish author as 'beith ag fegad na fingaili sin' ('to be beholding that fratricide') (*TnT*, 4491). The Early Irish laws highlight the seriousness and problematic nature of this crime in medieval Irish society.[337] Consequently, the positive descriptions of the brothers in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* are at odds with the seriousness of the crime which they commit.[338]

In the same way that the description of Polynices and Eteocles is initially contradictory to Statius's *Thebaid*, so is the imagery of Thebes. The city is introduced in a more positive light in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. It is described as *oíbind* ('pleasant') and *álaind* ('splendid')

[335] Battles, p. xv.
[336] Acts of *fingal* appear frequently in the additional material which the Irish translator incorporated into the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. For example, the description of Tydeus's fratricide of his brother Meleager (*TnT*, 345–65), the kin-murders detailed in *Scél an Mundtuirc* at *TnT*, 795–827, and the murder of Itys by his mother Procne (*TnT*, 1861–66). There is also exegesis of the kin-murders of Tantalus at *TnT*, 1569–77, which was known to the author through the tale *Finghala Clainne Tanntail*, see 'The Parricides of the Children of Tantalus', ed. and trans. by Mary E. Byrne, *Revue Celtique*, 44 (1927), 14–33; Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 60 and p. 63.
[337] See Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1998, repr. 1991), pp. 127–28.
[338] As demonstrated in the *Riss*, which highlights the history of kin-murder from both the Oedipean and the Argive line, medieval Irish authors appear to have been keen to explore the theme of kin-murder and its connections with the families involved in the Theban war. See Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', pp. 79–81.

(*TnT*, 2). In the *Thebaid*, the poet stresses the poor state of the city (I.144–50), emphasizing that Polynices and Eteocles' quarrel is driven only by their desire for naked power (*nuda potestas*, I.150). Their fight, the reader is told, is 'de paupere regno' ('for a pauper crown') (I.151). Statius goes on to describe how the brothers' dispute effects the city:

> dumque uter angustae squalentia iugera Dirces
> verteret aut Tyrii solio non altus ovaret
> exsulis ambigitur, periit ius fasque bonumque
> et vitae mortisque pudor. (*Thebaid,* I.152–55)
>
> While they disputed who should plough cramped Dirce's barren acres or lord it on the Tyrian exile's lowly throne, law human and divine, morality and decency in life and death, went by the board.

As the city descends into ruin, the poet depicts its people falling into moral deprivation. It may have been because of the heavily subjective view Statius imposed upon this passage that it was left out of the translation. Perhaps the translator felt that removing it lessened the contrast between his reimagining of the splendid capital city and the poverty of Thebes in the *Thebaid*.

The city in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* is not always pictured in such a flattering light. Later in the narrative, when Mercury brings Laius to Thebes from Taenarus, the translator describes Laius's reaction to entering the capital: 'Ua hecal 7 ua huruath les-[s]eom tocht isin cathraig ara crodacht[339] 7 ara colaigi' ('He feared and dreaded to enter the city because of its blood-thirstiness and because of its sinfulness') (*TnT*, 614–16). The corresponding imagery in Statius's *Thebaid* depicts Laius's yoke resting on the pillars of Thebes and his 'infectos etiamnum sanguine currus' ('chariot still bloodstained') (*Thebaid*, II.68) and alludes to Laius's violent death at the hands of Oedipus, a crime which pollutes the city. It seems quite possible that the Irish author had this imagery in mind when he rendered Laius's reaction to entering the city in the translation narrative.

3.3.2 Place, person, time, and cause of invention: creating an *accessus*

The contradictions resulting from the first lines of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* can perhaps be explained by the format which they take. The medieval Irish translator of the *Thebaid* was not alone in using this type of introductory format. As Meyer observes, this type of opening resembles the beginning of medieval Irish narratives such as *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó* ('The

[339] Calder took *cródacht* as meaning 'valour'. Although this usage is correct, it seems that in the context 'blood-thirstiness' is the better fit, *eDIL* s.v. *cródacht*.

Tale of Mac Dathos's Pig') or *Tochmarc Étaine* ('The Wooing of Étain').[340] Other adaptors of classical epic in medieval Ireland also used this type of opening. For instance, a similar format is also used in the introduction to the Book of Leinster version of *Togail Troí* (hereafter *TTLL*):[341]

> Rogab rí uasal airegda ordnide rigi in domain .i. Satuirn mac Polluir meic Phic meic Phéil Trois meic Esrom meic Chaim meic Noe. (*TTLL*, 1–3)
>
> A king, noble, peerless, renowned, gat the kingdom of the world, that is, Saturn, son of Pollor, son of Picus, son of Pelius, son of Tros, son of Misraim, son of Ham, son of Noah.

The opening follows the formula 'there was a noble (vel. sim) X over / among people Y, Z was his name', which Kim McCone identifies as being very common in secular Irish saga and also having hagiographical links; it is also reminiscent of parts of the Old Testament translated by Jerome into Latin from the Hebrew.[342] The comparison is extremely useful as it offers an example of the complex reception that even a short formula may have had as it developed into vernacular literature and provides some idea of the number of influences at work in medieval Irish narratives.[343]

As the prologue progresses Statius is identified as the poet responsible for the narrative and his intention in writing is provided:

> *Acht cena is andsin tainic ar menmain do Stait don airdfilid Frangcach sochinelach bunadh-indruim na Tiabanta, indus rocinset o Caithim, mac Aghenoir, 7 is e ant Aighenoir sin rop airdrigh na Tirde 7 na Sidoindoine, 7 is aice roui ingen sochinelach dar-ua comainm Eoropa*. (*TnT*, 8–12)
>
> *Now at that time it came to the mind of Statius the noble Frankish high poet the original beginning of the Thebans, how they came from Cadmus, son of Agenor, and he is that Agenor who was high-king of Tyre and Sidon, and it is he who had a noble daughter who was named Europa.*

This passage appears to suggest a misrepresentation of the opening lines of the *Thebaid* by the Irish author, stating that the poet's subject-matter was the origin of the Thebans. *TnT*, 8–9 seem

[340] Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish Version of the *Thebaid*', p. 693.
[341] All citations for *TTLL* are taken from *Togail Troi: The Destruction of Troy / transcribed from the facsimile of the Book of Leinster,* ed. and trans. by Whitley Stokes (Calcutta, 1881; Facsimile repr., Lampeter: Llanerch Press, 2005).
[342] Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature*, Maynooth Monographs 3 (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1990), pp. 48–49.
[343] Note also that in Egerton 1781, the adjective *aroile* ('a certain') is regularly used as the opening word for a variety of texts. See fols. 41^{v}, 43; 44^{r}, 48^{r}, 149^{v}, 150, and 150^{v}.

to allude to *Thebaid,* I.3, 'Pierius menti calor incidit' ('Pierian fire falls upon my soul'). The meaning of *mens* can be more literally taken as 'mind' here, which may infer that the Irish author had Statius's proem before him and drew on the poet's line. The medieval Irish introduction consequently drew the reader away from the war and fratricide between Polynices and Eteocles into a narrative detailing the *bunad* ('origin') of the Theban people.

A similar approach can be found in the short prologue to *TTLL*. Here, the Irish author developed a genealogy of the Trojans and Greeks involved in the conflict:

> Is é seo turthiud bunaid na Troiana 7 a craeb choibniusa fri Grécaib .i. Mercuir mac Ioib brathair Dardian meic Ioib. Is uad ragenatar Gréic. O Dardán immoro ragenatar Troianai. (*TTLL*, 41–44)
>
> This is an account of the origin of the Trojans and their branch of kinship to the Greeks: that is, Mercury son of Jupiter, brother of Dardanus son of Jupiter, it is from him the Greeks were born: from Dardanus, however, were born the Trojans.

These details were not included in *De Excidio Troiae Historia,* which begins with a narrative explaining the circumstances around Jason's search for the Golden Fleece (Chapters I & II).[344]

The Irish author described Statius as the '*airdfilid Frangcach*' ('*highpoet of the Franks*') (*TnT*, 8–9); a misidentification that appears to have developed from a confusion with the first-century rhetorician, L. Statius Ursulus of Toulouse. The association was a common one and reoccured throughout the medieval *accessus* tradition of the *Thebaid* and the *Achilleid*.[345] Indeed, the appearance of the name in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* may support the theory that elements of the historical prologue were drawn from an *accessus* to the *Thebaid*. H. Anderson suggests that the original error may have come from confusion over references to L. Statius Ursulus of Toulouse in Suetonius's *De Rhetoribus* and Jerome's translation of Eusebius's *Chronica*.[346]

Combined with the information given in the introduction above, these preliminary lines can be seen to form a type of abbreviated *accessus*, a preface to the narrative, providing *locus* ('place'), *tempus* ('time'), *persona* ('persona'), and *causa scribendi* ('cause of writing').[347] The place is Thebes; the time was during the period of Laius's dominion and

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[344] See *Daretis Phrygii de Excidio Troiae Historia*, ed. by Ferdinandus Meister (Leipzig: Teubner, 1873, repr. 1991), pp. 2–4.
[345] H. Anderson, *Manuscripts*, III, p. 2 and pp. 31–32.
[346] H. Anderson, *Manuscripts*, III, p. 2. See also *Fulgentius the Mythographer*, ed. and trans. by Leslie George Whitbread (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971), p. 235. Cf. The third recension of *Togail Troí*, where the authority for the story of Jason and Hypsipyle is said to be 'Sdait in fili socenelach do Franccaib' ('Statius the noble poet of the Franks') (RIA D iv 2, fol. 27^{r} a4), Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 63.
[347] Marin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: 'Grammatica' and Literary Theory 350–1100* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994, repr. 2006), pp. 121–22.

ownership of the lands over the city, and also Oedipus's kingship and his sons following; the person was Statius, and the cause of writing was that it came to the poet's mind to give the origin of the Thebans. This type of *accessus* was known to medieval scholars from the Latin commentary tradition, including the works of Donatus and Servius.[348] Introductory information in an *accessus* form can be found in a wide range of sources from medieval Ireland, including the prose preface to *Amra Coluim Cille* ('Poem for Colum Cille') and the Old Irish Treatise on the Psalter.[349] The format was sufficiently well known in medieval Ireland to be parodied at the beginning of the narrative *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne* ('Mac Con Glinne's Dream Vision').[350] Poppe highlights that the Irish usage of this form of *accessus* was probably used to draw out the Irish author's historical interests in the narrative.[351]

3.3.3 The trouble with Thebes: the history of Cadmus

Bearing in mind the concept of both classical literature in translation in Ireland and Irish literary narratives themselves as a type of *historia* (see **Chapter 3:2**), it seems possible that the addition of the Cadmus foundation myth to the Irish *Thebaid* was simply meant to develop the text as a historical narrative, demonstrating the chronology of the city from its foundation. Perhaps it is with this same method of reinvention seen in the prologue to *Togail Troí* that the Cadmus legend is included at the beginning of the Irish *Thebaid*. The desire to provide the *bunad* of the Thebans may itself be a sign of the vernacular author's historical interests.

In exploring the parameters of the *Thebaid*'s poetic action, Statius provides a *praeteritio* highlighting the long literary tradition associated with Thebes. He touches on the

[348] Irvine, pp. 121–22.
[349] See *The Amra Choluim Chilli of Dallan Forgaill*, ed. with trans. John O'Beirne Crowe (Dublin: McGlashan and Gill, 1871), pp. 9–23; Máire Herbert, 'The Preface to *Amra Coluim Cille*', in *Sages, Saints, and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney*, ed. by Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach, and Kim McCone (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1989), pp. 67–75; *Hibernica minora: being a fragment of an Old-Irish treatise on the Psalter with translation, notes and glossary and an appendix containing extracts hitherto unpublished from ms. Rawlinson, B. 512 in the Bodleian Library*, ed. by Kuno Meyer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), pp. 20–37; Pádraig Ó Néill, 'The Old–Irish Treatise on the Psalter and Its Hiberno-Latin Background', *Ériu*, 30 (1979), 148–64 (pp. 150–52).
[350] See Robin Flower, 'Quidam Scotigena .I. Discipulus Boëthii or Boëthius and the Four Conditions of a Tale', *Ériu*, 8 (1916), 150–54 and Abigail Burnyeat, '*Filidecht nó légend*? *Compilatio*, commentary and critical practice in the B text of *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne*', in *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne: Studies on a Middle Irish tale and its afterlives*, ed. by Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha and Jan Erik Rekdal (Uppsala, University of Uppsala, 2013), <http://hdl.handle.net/10379/3768> [Accessed 1/05/2016], pp. 1–17 (p. 3).
[351] Erich Poppe, 'Medieval Irish literary theory and criticism. 2. The evidence of narrative prose', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism. Volume 2, The Middle Ages*, ed. by Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), pp. 303–23 (p. 309). See also Poppe, 'Lucan's *Bellum Civile*', pp. 107–19.

rape of Europa and Cadmus's search for his sister (I.4–6), the myth of the dragon's teeth in the Theban Field of Mars (I.7–9), and the tragedies of Pentheus, Semele, and Ino. Vessey suggests that 'These lines are a form of the rhetorical figure *occultatio*, and they are written to remind readers of the of the early history of 'guilty Thebes'.'[352] As noted earlier, Statius anticipated that his readers would already know these tales. In contrast, the medieval Irish author recognised the need to provide the origins of the Thebans and therefore embraced the very material that Statius avoided. Yet, in situating the text, the translator appears not only to demonstrate an interest in providing the history of Thebes, but also an understanding of Statius's original programme for the epic. Is it possible that this prologue then ensured that the medieval reader was familiar with both the history of Thebes and the longevity of Theban criminality, which Vessey and Ganiban argue is so central to understanding the *Thebaid* and which Battles considers so important to the medieval Theban tradition?

In the Middle Irish *Thebaid* there is some indication that the Thebans are problematic characters from the very foundation of the city. Some possibilities for interpretation may be found in looking at how Cadmus and the first Thebans are portrayed. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Cadmus's men are sent into the grove to obtain water for a sacrifice to Jupiter and the serpent which kills them belongs to Mars (III.32). These details are left out of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* where the serpent kills the fifty men whom Cadmus had sent to bring him water after he developed a thirst (*TnT*, 43–47). He then goes to look for them and when he finds the serpent they fight (*TnT*, 57–66). Cadmus's venture into the woods and fight with the serpent (*Metamorphoses*, III.50–94) is heavily abbreviated and reworked. In Ovid's epic, emphasis is placed on Cadmus's weapons as he starts to follow his companions into the woods:

> tegumen derepta leoni
> pellis erat, telum splendenti lancea ferro
> et iaculum teloque animus praestantior omni.
> (*Metamorphoses*, III.52–54)
>
> For protection, he has a lion's skin; for weapon, a spear with glittering iron point and a javelin; and, better than all weapons, a courageous soul.

In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, the translator suppressed the description of the weapons, drawing instead on Cadmus's personal attributes as a warrior:

[352] Vessey, p. 64. See also Charles McNelis, *Statius's Thebaid and the Poetics of Civil War* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), p. 60.

> *Is andsin roeirigh Caithim, mac Aghenoir, 7 roghabh a edegh 7 rotrea-laim a arma, co mbruth miled, co feirg leoman, co neimh nathrach co dorus na huama da digail ar anti romarbh a mhuinntir*. (*TnT*, 57–61)
>
> *Then Cadmus, son of Agenor, rose and took his armour, and equipped his arms with a soldier's heat, a lion's rage, and a serpent's venom, [went] to the door of the cave to avenge himself on the one that had killed his people*.

Where the focus was previously on the hero's weapons, here the focus is on his warrior prowess. The description is built up using metaphor as he puts on his arms with '*co mbruth miled, co feirg leoman, co neimh nathrach*' ('*with a soldier's heat, a lion's rage, and a serpent's venom*').[353]

After defeating the serpent, the Irish narrative describes how Cadmus returned to Apollo's temple where he was instructed to till the soil with the serpent's teeth where it was slain (*TnT*, 66–68). As a result, men arose armed with weapons from the hill (*TnT*, 68–69):

> *Rothreabh in n-uir roime, 7 docathaighsit co feg, feochair, fercach; 7 romarbh cach dibh a chéle acht aen coicer nammá; 7 is lesin coicer sin rochumdaighedh in Teibh, maraen re Caithim, mac Aghenoir*. (*TnT*, 70–73)
>
> *He tilled the soil before him, and they fought fiercely, furiously, angrily; and each one of them killed the other except five men alone, and Thebes was built by these five along with Cadmus, son of Agenor*.

The men's conflict is fought '*co feg, feochair, fercach*' ('*fiercely, furiously, angrily*'), which seems to echo Ovid's own description of the men:

> exemploque pari furit omnis turba, suoque
> Marte cadunt subiti per mutua vulnera fratres.
> (*Metamorphoses*, III.122–23)
>
> The same dire madness raged in them all, and in mutual strife by mutual wounds these brothers of an hour perished.

Ovid's use of *furere* ('to rage') indicates the savage warfare which the men inflict upon each other.[354] Earlier, one of the men instructs Cadmus not to take up arms and to 'nec te civilibus insere bellis!' ('take no part in our fratricidal strife') (*Metamorphoses*, III.117). Although Ovid's description of civil war is not included in the Middle Irish narrative, there does appear to be a connection between the warring men grown from the serpent's teeth and the war

[353] Similar descriptions can be found of warriors at *TTLL*, 2034–36 and *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, 2567–70. See **Chapter 6:6.2** for discussion.
[354] William S. Anderson, ed. with commentary, *Ovid. Metamorphoses: Books 1–5* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), p. 349.

between Polynices and Eteocles set out in the introduction. The theme of fraternal strife is almost inescapable, and it seems likely that the reader is meant to see in the story of the foundation of Thebes a people whose characteristics are problematic from their very origins. Therefore, while Statius's portrayal of 'guilty Thebes' may not have been translated into the Irish Thebes tale verbatim, the concept can be seen through the addition of the Cadmus legend.

In both Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, the four men who survive this battle assist Cadmus in building Thebes, thus completing the foundation of the city. The Irish text goes on to describe how Cadmus's fared at Thebes and explains, '*rouoi co soinmech setach innte ré re foda, co [f]huair doinmed e uadheoidh*' ('*so that prosperously and richly he lived in [that city] for a long time, until misfortune found him in the end*') (*TnT*, 77–78). This misfortune is the promise of Cadmus's metamorphosis into a serpent. In Ovid's poem, when Cadmus slays the serpent, the conqueror gazes on its huge bulk and hears an ominous voice saying:

> 'quid, Agenore nate, peremptum
> serpentem spectas? et tu spectabere serpens.'
> (*Metamorphoses*, III.97–98)
>
> 'Why, O son of Agenor, dost thou gaze on the serpent thou hast slain? Thou too shalt be a serpent for men to gaze on.'

It is difficult to know whose voice Cadmus hears, but perhaps it is that of Mars, promising to punish Cadmus for killing his serpent.[355] Thus, Cadmus himself will later turn into a serpent, a transformation which affects his wife Harmonia too (*Metamorphoses*, IV.563–603). The prophecy given to Cadmus in Ovid's epic does not appear in the Irish narrative, yet the Irish author seems to have had knowledge of the story. In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, Cadmus and Harmonia's transformation into serpents comes towards the end of the Cadmus legend and is described simply as, '*Uair rosoad e fen 7 a shetigh a ndelbaibh nathrach co cend secht mbliadan*' ('*One time he himself and his wife were changed into serpent-shapes for the duration of seven years*') (*TnT*, 78–79).[356] Their condition is not permanent, however, and the gods change them back in the end (*TnT*, 79–81).

[355] W. S. Anderson notes that 'Although no effort is made to explain here why Cadmus should not look at the dead dragon or why he should be punished - if it is that - by metamorphosis as a snake, subsequent stories in Book 3 suggest that there are sights that mortals may not behold without penalty', *Ovid. Metamorphoses: Books 1–5*, p. 347.

[356] The explanation that Cadmus and Harmonia spend seven years as snakes does not come from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, IV.563–603, nor does it appear in Statius's description of them as snakes at *Thebaid*, II.289–91. Cf. Ovid's account of Tiresias's metamorphosis into woman for seven years (*Metamorphoses*, III.323–31).

The following section of the narrative provides the explanation that from Cadmus's seed came Oedipus, son of Laius (*TnT*, 82), and there follows Oedipus's history (see **Chapter 2:4**) up to the point where he is first introduced in the *Thebaid*, calling on Tisiphone to avenge the neglect he has received at the hands of his sons (I.56–87). The Irish author then provided further explanation of who Polynices and Eteocles were before continuing with the translation of the *Thebaid*:

> Imthusa immorro da ma[i]c Eidip .i. Eothiocles 7 Polenices, roeirig tnuth 7 trenchosnum eturu im rigi na Tebe, gu narfhaem neach dib comriond na cathrach na in chiniuda d' aroile d' eis dallta a n-athar. Ni thucsad onoir na huaisli da n-athair, acht robadar fein co diumsach drochaicentach a[c] caithim a n-atharda 7 ind [fh]eraind, 7 adar le gach mac dib ba he fen bid ri and. (*TnT*, 140–46)
>
> However, concerning the two sons of Oedipus, that is, Eteocles and Polynices, envy and strong contention arose between them about the kingship of Thebes so that neither of them could allow the other an equal share of the city or the people after the blinding of their father. They did not give honour or distinction to their father, but were themselves wasting their patrimony and estate with pride and ill–nature, and each one of the sons thought it should be himself that should be king there.

This passage may work as a marker for the reader to know that the story of the brothers and the great war at Thebes will now begin. By highlighting the quarrel between Eteocles and Polynices here, the Irish author may well have intended to remind his reader that this narrative will end in an act of *fingal*.

It seems that, while Statius's subjective voice has been removed from the Irish Thebes tale, his themes of *ira*, *furor*, and particularly 'guilty Thebes' remain. While medieval translation practices and styles occasionally come into conflict with these themes, the Irish author highlighted the conflict between Polynices and Eteocles, drawing the reader's attention to it, and ensuring that it was not forgotten.

3.4 The history of Oedipus

Moving on from the history of Cadmus, this section explores the development of the history of Oedipus and the possible source material for this narrative. It focuses primarily on the affinities between the history of Oedipus in the historical prologue to the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and VM II, 230, the myth of Oedipus. This section builds on Punzi's study of the Oedipus myth in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and *Roman de Thèbes*, VM II, and its possible links to Statius

scholia.[357] I will also draw on Lowell Edmunds's discussion of the development of the life of Oedipus as it appears in VM II, 230 and *Roman de Thèbes*.[358]

Punzi and Edmunds both note common features in the medieval retellings of the life of Oedipus which differ from the classical myth as it appeared in the tragedies of Sophocles and Seneca.[359] There is no plague at Thebes to cause the discovery of Oedipus's true identity as the son of Laius in these medieval narratives. Instead, they provide a more chronological view of his life: first detailing his exposure as an infant when he was left hung by his feet in a tree, followed by his rescue by Polybus, then his patricide of Laius, in ignorance, the riddle of the Sphinx, and the eventual revelation of Oedipus's identity when Jocasta sees the scars on his feet after many years of marriage. These medieval tales do not appear to have drawn on the Greek or Latin tragedies, which raises the question of their origin.

Following Schmidt's suggestion that BU R. 124 represented the lost argument to Lactantius *ISTC* Book I, Edmunds argues that the life of Oedipus in VM II, 230 and the *Roman de Thèbes* may also have been drawn from this lost argument, or had, at least, a common source.[360] In contrast, Punzi argues that the vernacular retellings of Oedipus were subject to a wider range of influences and avoids making a direct link between these and any single Latin source.[361] Following Punzi's research, however, Edmunds extends his argument to include other versions of the medieval myth discussed by her, including the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, the anonymous *Historia Oedipi* ('The History of Oedipus'), and Boccaccio's *Genealogie deorum genilium* ('Genealogy of the pagan gods').[362]

In this section, I provide close readings of the Oedipus tale in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and VM II, 230. I consider if there are links, beyond the example of BU R. 124, to commentary and *accessus* material in the *Thebaid* manuscript tradition and question if the links made to Lactantius's lost argument by Edmunds can be substantiated.

3.4.1 A connection to Statius scholia?

Similarities between the content of the myths of Cadmus and Oedipus in BU R. 124 to the historical prologue in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* have led Punzi to consider a possible

[357] Punzi, pp. 25–40.
[358] Edmunds, 'Oedipus in the Middle Ages', 140–55.
[359] Punzi, p. 38 and Lowell Edmunds, *Oedipus* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 65–66.
[360] Edmunds, 'Oedipus in the Middle Ages', pp. 140–46. See also **Chapter 2:7**.
[361] Punzi, pp. 28–33.
[362] Edmunds, *Oedipus*, p. 65. The *Historia Oedipi* mentioned here can be found at Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, D 276 Inf., fols. 47^{v}–48^{r} compiled with Seneca's plays and *Planctus Oedipi* ('Oedipus's Lament').

connection between the two.[363] She highlights that, although it was structurally close, the Irish version is not an exact translation of the myth given in BU R. 124, and uses this to demonstrate the variety of scholia available to medieval adaptors of the classical tales through the manuscripts from which they worked.[364] Punzi demonstrates the range of scholastic material which the medieval Irish and Old French vernacular adaptors of the *Thebaid* may have had access to through the similarities and variants between them. H. Anderson highlights that the tale of Oedipus appears as a mythological preface without an accompanying myth of Cadmus in nine manuscripts of the *Thebaid* and Statius scholia.[365] He provides an example of this preface as it appears in the twelfth–century 'Bern–Burney *accessus*' (ll. 49–78).[366] Like the other Oedipus myths in the *Thebaid* manuscript tradition, Anderson considers this to be a variation on VM II's account, with the following differences:

> Oedipus hears from Delphi that he is the son of a king of Greece (59). He asks Polibus, who tells him he must be the son of Laius (60–61). War then breaks out between the people of Corinth and the people of Thebes, and Oedipus unwittingly kills his own father and marries his mother.[367]

The variations in this *accessus* contribute to the premise that Oedipus's history was subject to a wide range of influences in the medieval period, but that the basic outline for the tale can be found in VM II's account.

Punzi observes the following similarities between the myth of Oedipus in VM II, 230 and the Middle Irish *Thebaid*: that in both narratives Oedipus meets his father by chance and kills him unknowingly (*TnT*, 101–08); that he goes on to marry his mother in ignorance (*TnT*, 109–13); and that it is the scars on his feet from being nailed on to the tree as an infant which leads to the revelation of his true identity (*TnT*, 113–35).[368] She also notes the affinity between the tale of the Sphinx at *TnT*, 157–70 and VM II, 230.11–15; noting that this part of the myth is given in the Middle Irish at the point corresponding to *Thebaid*, I. 66, which was glossed by Lactantius (*ISTC*, I.226–29).[369] This highlights that although VM II's version of the myth is told in one sequence, in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* it was not.[370] This should not deter us from making a connection between the two, however, as, despite the overall order of events in the

[363] Punzi, p. 14.
[364] Punzi, p. 26.
[365] H. Anderson, *Manuscripts*, III, pp. 9–10. This does not include BU R. 124.
[366] H. Anderson, *Manuscripts*, III, pp. 11–13.
[367] H. Anderson, *Manuscripts*, III, p. 10.
[368] Punzi, p. 28 and pp. 32–33.
[369] Punzi, p. 38. However, the Sphinx legend given in Lactantius's gloss at this point is not connected with the Irish narrative.
[370] Punzi, pp. 25–40.

Middle Irish narrative, many of the episodes are essentially the same as those in the Mythographer's narrative (see **Tables 7a** and **7b**). It seems to me, however, that Punzi overlooks some of the principal correspondences between these two narratives. Therefore, VM II, 230 and the Oedipus myth in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* are explored more closely below.

3.4.2 Mythographic correspondences

In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, the end of the history of Cadmus at *TnT*, 76–81 bridges into the life of Oedipus through the explanation that, 'is do shil innd fhir sin rochinsead na rig tromglana Thiabanda uile, 7 is da sil Eidip mic Lai' ('of that man's seed came all the great pure Theban kings, and of his seed was Oedipus, son of Laius') (*TnT* 81–82). The history of Oedipus presented in the Middle Irish narrative is a more extensive version than the one presented in VM II, 230.

As **Tables 7a** and **7b** highlight, the essentials of VM II, 230 can be found in the Middle Irish narrative. The Middle Irish *Thebaid*, however, includes some additional material: Polybus assumes sovereignty of his land and committed the government to Oedipus (*TnT*, 98–101); Apollo instructs Oedipus to give his name to no man and to battle with the first man he met (*TnT*, 124–26); Oedipus acknowledges his misdeeds (*TnT*, 133–35); Oedipus dwells in a cave (*TnT*, 147–52); and Oedipus's prayer to Tisiphone in which he says he killed Laius at Phocis and that it was with her aid that he solved the riddles of the Sphinx (*TnT*, 153–57). The latter two are direct translations of *Thebaid* I.46–55 and I.56–67. The other episodes from VM II, 230 are all present in an expanded form, which demonstrates that there are strong correlations between the two and suggests that they must have had at least a common ancestor.

After episodes (1) to (4) appear in the same order, a variant element of the tale appears in the Irish, which sees Polybus gain kingship of his lands and Oedipus the rule of government (*TnT*, 98–101). As Punzi notes, Oedipus's role here seems to be implied in the mythological preface to the manuscript BU R. 124, where it is said that 'Nec multo post aulae praeponitur' ('Not long after he was placed in command of the court').[371] Episode (6) comes next in the Irish narrative, which explains that Oedipus and Laius met by chance and that neither man knew who the other was (*TnT*, 103–04) (see **Chapter 3:4:3** below). Laius is then killed by Oedipus and he takes his father's lands (cf. VM II, 230.9–11). In the Middle Irish text, this is also the point at which Oedipus married Jocasta; however, this does not appear in the Mythographer's version until episode (10).

[371] Punzi, pp. 31–32.

Table 7a: Sequence of events in the history of Oedipus from the accounts in VM II, 230.2-23 and *TnT*, 82-139

The numbers in the outline indicate the order of the main structural elements of the Mythographer's account and how these correspond with those the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. Where the latter deviates in sequence the symbol ❖ is used.

VM II, 230		***TnT***	
(1)	Introduction of Laius and Jocasta (2).	**(1)**	Introduction of Laius (82-83).
(2)	Jocasta is ordered to kill all the sons she bore, for Laius has heard that he would be killed by his sons (2-4).	**(2)**	Laius had been told by prophets and druids that seeing any one of his children would end his life, therefore all male children are killed (83-86).
(3)	Jocasta gives birth and orders the child to be taken to a wood and left with its feet pierced (4-5).	**(3)**	Oedipus is born from Jocasta and afterwards he is taken to a wood and his mother orders that he should not be killed but left in a tree (87-92).
(4)	Polybus, king of Phocis, who is hunting in the forest, rescues the child and names him Oedipus (5-7).	**(4)**	Polybus, a king's son, is out plundering and hears the child's cry. He falls in love with the child and fosters him (93-98).
(5)	Oedipus is taunted for being ignorant of his birth and so goes to the temple to make inquiry (7-9).	❖	Polybus assumes sovereignty of his land and committed the government to Oedipus (98-101).
(6)	On the way he meets Laius and ignorant of their connection, he kills him. Thus, Oedipus comes into possession of Laius's kingdom and goods (9-11).	**(6)**	Oedipus unexpectedly meets Laius and each man demands the name of the other. When neither give their name, they fight a duel and Laius is killed. Unknowingly, Oedipus assumes his father's land and marries his mother (101-10).
(7)	Oedipus continues his journey and meets the Sphinx (11-12).	**(11)**	Jocasta sees the scars on Oedipus's feet and asks what pierced them (110-14).
(8)	The Sphinx's riddle is given (12-15).	**(3)**	Oedipus answers explaining that his feet were pierced when he was left in a tree in the forest. Polybus brought him up as his own son (114-18).
(9)	Oedipus solves the riddle and kills the monster (15).	**(5)**	Oedipus explains that he was told that he was a foundling and went to find out from Apollo where he came from (118-23).
(10)	Oedipus returns to Thebes and unknowingly marries his mother, Jocasta. Eteocles, Polynices, Antigone and Ismene are born from the marriage (16-18).	❖	Apollo instructed Oedipus to give his name to no man and to battle with the first man he met (124-26).
(11)	Jocasta sees a scar on Oedipus's foot and recognises him as her own son (18-19).	**(6)**	The first man Oedipus met was Laius near Phocis and he killed him (126-29).
(12)	Oedipus tears out his eyes and goes to live in an underground chamber (20-21).	**(11)**	Jocasta identifies Oedipus as her son, repeating elements of **(3)** and expresses regret for the birth of their children, Eteocles, Polynices, Antigone and Ismene (129-33).
(13)	Eteocles and Polynices quarrel over the throne and settle on divided rule. Eteocles takes the first year and Polynices goes into exile (21-22).	❖	Oedipus acknowledges his misdeeds (133-35).
(14)	In exile Polynices goes to Adrastus and marries his daughter, Argia (22-23).	**(12)**	Oedipus plucks out his eyes in order for him not to see or be seen (135-39).

Table 7b: Sequence of events in the history of Oedipus from the accounts in VM II, 230.23-28 and *TnT*, 140-70

VM II, 230		***TnT***	
(15)	Eteocles refuses to return the kingdom to Polynices (23-24).	**(13)**	Eteocles and Polynices cannot agree over who should be sovereign at Thebes (140-45).
(16)	With his father-in-law and six other leaders, Polynices goes to war with Thebes (24-26).	❖	Oedipus dwells in a cave (147-52), cf. *Thebaid*, I. 46-55.
(17)	The brothers kill each other and Adrastus returns to his fatherland alone (26-28).	❖	Oedipus's prayer to Tisiphone in which he says he killed Laius at Phocis and that it was with her aid that he solved the riddles of the Sphinx (153-57), cf. *Thebaid*, I. 56-67.
		(8)	The Sphinx is described, and the riddle is given (157-69).
		(9)	Oedipus describes how he solved the riddle and killed the monster (169-70).

The Middle Irish *Thebaid* then moves on to the revelation scene, where Jocasta sees Oedipus's scars. The Mythographer's narrative describes this very briefly 'Hic itaque quadam die se calcians mater uidit cicatrices factas et agnoscens ingemuit miserabiliter' ('And so one day as he was putting on his shoes, his mother saw the scars that had been made [on his feet] and recognising him she groaned miserably') (VM II, 230.18–19). In contrast, the Irish author expands the episode to include a conversation between Jocasta and Oedipus in which the discovery of his birth is revealed (*TnT*, 110–35). In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, Jocasta asks Oedipus where the scars on his feet come from and his answer repeats episodes (3) and (6) from the Mythographer's version and elaborates on the temple visit described in episode (5).[372] Jocasta's identification of him as her son at *TnT*, 129–33, then echo episode (3). There is further repetition in Oedipus's subsequent acknowledgement that he has acted 'tre anfhis 7 aneolus' ('through lack of knowledge and ignorance') (*TnT*, 135). This is the same phrase used at *TnT*, 107–08 during the explanation that Laius was killed by Oedipus. The emphasis on the men's mutual ignorance of who the other is when they meet can also be found in the Mythographer's account, 'Dumque iret, obuiauit illi pater decrepita etate; quem ut uidit, ignorans esse patrem occidit' ('And while he was going, his father, in decrepit old age, met him on the way; when he saw him, he killed him, not knowing that he was his father') (VM II, 230.9–10).

The move from narrative in the third person to direct speech in this passage appears to be a stylistic choice on the part of the translator when rendering the tale into a vernacular

[372] Punzi has noted that a similar variation also appears in *Roman de Thèbes*, see Punzi, pp. 34–35.

Irish prose. In discussing the Early Modern Irish adaptation of Beves of Hamtoun, Poppe notes that, 'Irish narrators were never very interested in subtle psychological explanation, and often motivation is externalized.'[373] This stylistic feature is also reflected in aspects of the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. In Statius's *Thebaid*, when Tydeus disturbs Polynices in his resting place in the doorway to Adrastus's kingdom in Book 1, the poet gave a narrative description of the encounter in which the two men are said to exchange verbal threats (I.408–13). At *TnT*, 371–75, the corresponding lines of the Irish translation, dialogue has been used to externalize the initial disturbance.[374]

It is not only in the essentials of the myth's make–up that connections can be found. There are details in the narrative which seem to articulate very closely the Mythographer's account. For instance, the Irish accounts sets out to explain that Laius was advised that if he saw any of his children, his life would not last longer (*TnT*, 82–85), 'conid imi sin donithea gach duine claindi roberthea dó, do mudugud uili' ('so that it came about that every man–child that was born to him, [they were] all destroyed') (*TnT*, 85–86). This strongly echoes the Latin description where Laius advises Jocasta, 'ut omnes filios ex se genitos necaret' ('that he would kill any sons born from her') (VM II, 230.1–2), particularly, the emphasis that it is the sons that must be killed.

The details around Oedipus being left in the tree are also very similar. In both episode (2) of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and VM II, 230, it is Jocasta who orders Oedipus to be put in the tree; a detail which Punzi notes is absent in BU R. 124 and *Roman de Thèbes*.[375] The Mythographer describes too how Oedipus's feet were pierced when he was left in the tree (VM II, 230.4). As can be seen from **Table 7a**, although the Middle Irish text does not include the same information at this point in the narrative, it is provided later when Oedipus explains to his mother-wife that this was how his feet came to be pierced (*TnT*, 114–17).

The Mythographer gives a brief description of the abandonment of Oedipus and his subsequent rescue by Polybus:

> Illa pariens, puerum plantis perforatis in siluam deferri iussit. In eadem silua Polybus rex Phocidis uenatione erat occupatus et uagitum pueri audiens afferri iubens tamquam suum nutriuit Oedipumque uocauit. (VM II, 230.4–7)
>
> When she was giving birth, she ordered the boy to be carried to the woods, his feet pierced. In the same wood, Polybus, king of Phocis, was engaged in a hunt and, hearing the cry of the boy, ordering that he be brought to him, he raised him as his own and called him Oedipus.

[373] Erich Poppe, 'The Early Modern Irish Version of Beves of Hamtoun', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* (1992), 77–98 (p. 94).
[374] This technique is also highlighted in **Chapter 4:4.2**.
[375] Punzi, p. 26.

In contrast, the narrative in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* expands upon this scene, giving heart-wrenching view of the babe left alone in the wood crying before Polybus finds him:

> [R]oaithin a mathair gan a malairt n[a] a mudugud, acht a thocbhail i crand comard comreid isinn fhidbaid, 7 rafacbad Eidip amlaid sin, 7 o rafacad he *a* aenur, rogab a chuideran noeidean. Atchualaig immorro araile mac rig, robai ar fogail 7 ar dibeirg, in geran sin na noidean arna cengul isin chrund dar-ba comainm Polipus ainm in gilla sin. Tanic in fer sin remi d' indsaigid na naidean, 7 adchondairc in naidin isinn eceandail i rroibe. Tucastair grad ndermair do, 7 ruc leis e da aileamain 7 da altrom amal mac mbunaid do fen. (*TnT*, 89–98)
>
> [H]is mother gave orders that he should not be injured or destroyed but that he should be lifted up into a very high and smooth tree in the wood; and Oedipus was left like that, and when he was left alone, he began his childish little cry. However, a certain king's son, that youth's name was Polybus, who had been plundering and marauding, heard the wailing of that infant bound in the tree. That man came forward towards the infant and saw the infant in the plight in which it was. He gave a very great love to him, and he took him with him to be nursed and reared as if he was his own son.

The Irish translator appears to have been drawing on the Latin description of Polybus out hunting (*uenatione*, VM II, 230.6), when he depicted the prince 'robai ar fogail 7 ar dibeirg' ('who had been plundering and marauding) (*TnT*, 93–94). The word *uagitus* ('uagitum', VMII, 230.6) used for the child's crying in the Latin account, can be seen in the rendering of Oedipus's 'chuideran noeidean' ('childish little cry') (*TnT*, 92) and 'in geran sin na noidean' ('the wailing of that infant') (*TnT*, 94).[376] The translation here seems to emphasize the vulnerability of the child, drawing attention to its distress ('eceandail', *TnT*, 97), which the Mythographer's account does not dwell on. In this way, the Irish account appears more subjective than the brisk objectivity of the Mythographer. Once the child is found, the Mythographer tells the reader that Polybus has the infant brought to him, fosters him, and then names him Oedipus (VM II, 230.6–7). Again, this description is elaborated upon in the Middle Irish where Polybus is first described as conceiving a love of the child and then choosing to have him nursed and reared as his own son (*TnT*, 95–98). This element of the tale is later repeated by Oedipus as he explains to Jocasta how he came by the scars on his feet (*TnT*, 117–16).

The similarities between both the basic elements and some of the specific textual details of VM II, 230 and the history of Oedipus in Middle Irish *Thebaid* suggest that the author of the latter had to access to a variant of the myth which came from the same tradition. Considering the transmission of mythological prefaces on Oedipus in the *Thebaid* manuscript

[376] Cf. Calder translates 'naiden' as 'suckling' in *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, 1359–60, which corresponds to the 'uagitum' ('wailing') of infants Aeneas encounters at the entrance to Hades (*Aeneid*, VI.426–29).

tradition, it seems probable to me that this was available to the Irish author through the exemplar of the *Thebaid* from which he worked.

3.4.3 Apollo's advice to Oedipus and *Aided Óenfir Aífe*

As highlighted above, episode (5) from VM II's account, in which Oedipus visits the temple, is amplified in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. In the latter, it appears as part of Oedipus's explanation to Jocasta of where the scars on his feet came from (*TnT*, 114–29). The Mythographer describes Oedipus's visit to the temple only briefly: 'Cui dum improperatum fuisset se genus suum ignorare, iuit ad templum ut quereret' ('Then having been taunted that he was himself ignorant of his birth, he went to the temple in order to ask') (VM II, 230.7–9). In contrast, the Middle Irish narrative includes a considerably more detailed explanation from Oedipus:

> D' fiarfaigus[377] do Pholipus nar-fidir[378] sin indissi dam mar fuair me; 7 as e ni doronnus, dul chom Apaill, dea na faistine, 7 a iarfaigid de cait a b[f]uigbind m' athairthir. Raidis Apaill rimsa gan mo slondud do denam do enduine, 7 in cetfher tecemad dam and, comlond do chur ris, 7 bagebaind fis m' athar *7 fis mo mhathar* thrit sin. Et is e cetfer dorala cucum asa haithli sin .i. Laius ar se[chron] selga acon chathraig ac Potchis, 7 darochair limsa é mar adchualabair sib. (*TnT*, 120–29)
>
> I asked of Polybus whether he could tell me how he had found me: and what I did was to go to Apollo, the god of prophecy, and to ask from him where I should find my fatherland. Apollo told me to make my name known to no man, and to do battle with the first man that met me there, and I should obtain tidings of my father *and my mother that way*. And he was the first man to meet me after that, that is, Laius, astray while hunting near the city of Phocis, and he fell by me, as you have heard.

Apollo's advice to Oedipus here recalls the description of the encounter between Oedipus and Laius at *TnT*, 105–06, 'Et bai cach dib ac iarraid a sloindti uar a chele, 7 ni dearnaid neach dib a slondud da chele' ('And each of them was demanding from the other his name, and neither of them would give the other his name'). The description of the men demanding each other's names is not there in the Mythographer's account. Punzi notes that Apollo's prophecy to Oedipus features in the *Roman de Thèbes*.[379] In the Old French poem, however, Apollo's prophecy is less specific, telling Oedipus only that 'Quant tu seras | issuz de ci, si trouveras |

[377] Calder translates 'I ascertained', which I change to 'I asked', *eDIL* s.v. *íarmi-foich*. Calder's use of 'ascertained' is replaced with 'ask' throughout.
[378] Calder translates 'that he could not tell me', which I change to 'whether he could tell me', *eDIL* s.v. *ro-finnadar*. Note that this line is problematic as it does not appear to connect with the following action.
[379] Punzi, pp. 34–35.

un houme que tu ocirras; | ainsi ton pere connoistras' ('When you have left | this place you will find | a man whom you will kill | thus you will know your father') (*Roman de Thèbes*, ll. 203–06).[380]

It is not clear from where this element of the myth derived. There is no reference to this episode in Lactantius's commentary. One possible source for its development, however, may be Hyginus's *Fabulae*, 67. In this version of the myth, Oedipus is described as going off to Delphi searching, presumably for information on his origins, although a lacuna in the text leaves us ignorant of Oedipus's true purpose. Aspects of Hyginus's *fabula* on Oedipus have previously been observed in the medieval life of Oedipus by Edmunds, who notes an affinity between BU R. 124 and the Latin tradition of the myth represented by Hyginus.[381] He draws attention to the fact that in BU R. 124 the infant's exposure takes the form of either being left to drift at sea or being left on the sea shore; a detail which seems to follow Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 66, in which Oedipus is found by the sea.[382] Consequently, it seems possible that the exemplars used by the Old French and Irish vernacular authors of the tale may have carried some variant of the myth which drew on this tradition.

While a strand of the Hyginus tradition of Oedipus may have been available in the scholia the vernacular authors worked from, an influence from a medieval Irish native narrative may have been at work in the case of the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. The Old Irish tale *Aided Óenfir Aífe* is a short story describing how Connla, the son of Cú Chulainn and Aífe, comes to die at the hands of his father.[383] At the beginning of the tale Aífe, the daughter of Scáthach, who teaches Cú Chulainn his weapon feats, becomes pregnant by the warrior. Cú Chulainn then provides the following advice for her to pass on to his son:

> 'Bid ind or[d]nasc n-ōrda sa acud,' or sē, 'corop coimsi don mac. Intan bas coimse dōm tætadh dom chuindchid-sea inn-Ere 7 nachamberead āenfer dia conair 7 nachasloindedh do ænfer 7 nā fēmded comland ōenfir.' (*Aided Óenfir Aífe*, 1)
>
> 'Keep this golden thumb-ring,' said he, 'until it fits the boy. When it fits him, let him come to seek me in Ireland. Let no man put him off his road, let him not make himself known to any one man, and let him not refuse combat to any.'

Cú Chulainn's advice ultimately leads to Connla's death, for when the boy comes to Ireland, the fact that he will not give his name and insists on fighting each man he meets, ultimately brings him into conflict with his father, whom he cannot defeat. Cú Chulainn chooses to fight

[380] Translation from M. Victoria Guerin, *The Fall of Kings and Princes: Structure and Destruction in Arthurian Tragedy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 31.
[381] Edmunds, 'Oedipus in the Middle Ages', p. 147.
[382] Edmunds, 'Oedipus in the Middle Ages', p. 147.
[383] See 'The Death of Conla', ed. and trans. by Kuno Meyer, *Ériu*, 1 (1904), 113–21.

Connla despite a warning from Emer, his wife, who recognises Connla as her husband's son and tells him 'Nā fer finga[i]l 'mot ēnmac' ('Do not murder thy only son!') (8). Yet her husband will not heed her and says that even if it is his son, he will kill him for the honour of Ulster (9). Before he fights Connla, Cú Chulainn does request the boy's name explaining 'Adbēla-so immorro meni sloindi' ('However, thou wilt die unless thou tellest thy name') (10). Connla answers 'Bid fīr' ('Let it be so') (10), leading to a fight between them in which the boy is killed by Cú Chulainn using the *gai bulga*.

It seems possible that the author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* saw some allusion between these two narratives. The third and fourth parts of Cú Chulainn's advice for his son, telling him not to make himself known to any man and not to refuse combat with any one (1), echoes Apollo's words to Oedipus. He is also told to make his name known to no man, and to do battle with the first he meets. There are differences to the scenarios, however. In *Aided Óenfir Aífe* it is Cú Chulainn himself who leaves the advice for Aífe to pass on to Connla, whereas it is Apollo, rather than Laius, who gives direction to Oedipus. Emer's warning to Cú Chulainn, that he should not go to meet the boy on the shore because he is his son, appears to put him in a position of knowledge which contrasts from the state of ignorance in which Laius and Oedipus fight each other. This then creates a greater sense of character complexity in Cú Chulainn's decision to meet and fight Connla (see below). The scenario in *Aided Óenfir Aífe* can be seen as a kind of inversion of the one in the Oedipus legend. In the former, it is the father who kills the son and in the latter the son who kills the father. Irrespective of these differences, both Connla and Oedipus are seeking their father when they enter into combat and both follow elements of the same advice with tragic consequences.

Joanne Findon argues that it is Emer's voice in *Aided Óenfir Aífe* which can help us understand the conflict between father and son in this narrative. She observes that it is Emer's presence in the tale, revealing Connla's identity and warning her husband not to fight, that 'shifts the tale's focus onto the tragic consequences of a conflict between law and honour'.[384] Emer warns Cú Chulainn that if he kills Connla, he commits *fingal*. Findon highlights the importance of the tale in the context of this grave crime, and draws on the Irish law texts, which discuss what Cú Chulainn's penalty for this act of *fingal* would have been.[385] Findon examines the idea that Cú Chulainn's fight with his son is based on a conflict of interests, exploring how Connla's public insult to the Ulstermen in not accepting Condere's welcome and his insistence on fighting Conall Cernach puts the honour of Ulster at risk, hence Cú

[384] Joanna Findon, 'A Woman's Words: Emer versus Cú Chulainn in *Aided Óenfir Aífe*', in *Ulidia: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Ulster Cycle of Tales*, ed. by James P. Malory and Gerard Stockman (Belfast: December Publications, 1994), pp. 139–48 (pp. 142–43).
[385] Findon, pp. 143–46.

Chulainn's insistence that he fight the boy.[386] In killing his son, however, he commits *fingal* which, considering the seriousness of the crime, leaves the hero in a deeply ambiguous role.[387]

Despite the emphasis on Oedipus's ignorance in killing his father in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, the translator may well have seen parallels in this narrative to the scenario in *Aided Óenfir Aífe*. For instance, the advice which Apollo gives to Oedipus is similar to the advice which Cú Chulainn gives to Aífe to pass on to Connla, and in both narratives the father and son conflict results in *fingal*. It is possible that the prominence of the men demanding each other's names in the Oedipus narrative was, therefore, partly drawn from a knowledge of the medieval Irish narrative and that the scene could be understood in the context of both heroic honour, that neither man can give way, and also in relation to the Irish laws surrounding *fingal*. It seems likely that this resonance would also have been evident to medieval Irish readers.

3.4.4 An unresolved riddle: Oedipus and the Sphinx

Returning to the type of source material discernible in the history of Oedipus, the elements relating to the Sphinx raise interesting questions about what scholia the manuscript exemplar of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* contained. As highlighted in **Tables 7a** and **7b,** episodes (8) and (9) from VM II, 230 appear as part of Oedipus's extended prayer to Tisiphone in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* (cf. *Thebaid*, I.56–87). This material appears to have developed as explanatory matter following Oedipus's mention of the Sphinx at *Thebaid*, I.66 (cf. *TnT*, 157). Punzi acknowledges a link to VM II's description of the Sphinx's riddle at this point in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and suggests that the Old French and Middle Irish vernacular authors used *amplificatio* to develop their narratives from Lactantius's note on *Thebaid*, I.66.[388] This suggestion is unsatisfactory, however, as the Irish narrative does not draw on Lactantius's commentary at this point; nor does it draw on Lactantius's gloss at III.256–58 (cf. *Thebaid*, III.121), which also mentions the Sphinx.

At a glance, the Middle Irish narrative does appear to correspond with the riddle in VM II, 230:

> Inde procedens uenit ad montem ubi erat Sphynx monstrum omnibus pretereuntibus hoc enigma proponens, quid primo iiii deinde iii deinde ii deinde iii deinde iiii graditur pedibus, ea conditione ut qui solueret, ipsi pennas incideret, qui non, capite truncaretur, quod Oedipus soluens monstrum occidit. (VM II, 230.11–15)

[386] Findon, p. 146.
[387] Findon, pp. 143–45.
[388] Punzi, p. 35. The full gloss to which Punzi refers here is given only in the manuscript variants to the note at *ISTC*, 226–29 in Sweeney, ed. *Lactantius Placidus*, p. 11.

> Proceeding after that he arrived to the mountain where the Sphinx monster would put this riddle to all passing by, 'what has first four then three then two then three then four steps by foot', on the condition that if the riddle was solved, he could cut the wings from him [or her], whoever did not, would have his head cut off. Oedipus solved that [the riddle] and killed the monster.

In the Middle Irish, Oedipus explains his own reference to the Sphinx:

> '[I]s e in torathar sin robai i tír na Tiabanda, 7 is e rofiarfaigead do gach oen tecmad da indsaigid: "Cade int anmanda cetharchosta, dechosta, trechosta?" Et inte na tabrad tuaslucud arin ceist do, romarbad sin uile iad, cein nogo ranac-sa da insaigid, intan roba ac iar[r]aid m' athar, 7 rofhiarfaig in torathar na ceasta cetna damsa, 7 adrubart-sa ris cor-be in duine sin, uair ceatharchosach he ina naideeanntacht .i. cona da chois 7 cona da laim i n-enfheacht ac imluad dho: dechosta immorro *é* inna ocuataid .i. 7 ina ferdacht .i. a da chois amain aicci ac imtheacht, trechosta immorro é ina seanntacht, 7 ina sheanordacht .i. a da chois 7 a lorg aicci ac imtheacht. Et o rothaimniges in chesta sin, rofersum comlond feig fuireochair fearamail, 7 torchair in torathar de sin fadeoid.' (*TnT*, 157–70)
>
> '[T]hat is the monster that was in the land of the Thebans, and it is that which used to ask every one that came towards it: "What is the four-footed, two-footed, and three-footed animal?" And he who could not give a solution for the riddle, that he would kill them all, until I came towards it, while I was in search of my father, and the monster asked the same riddles of me and I told it that it was man, because he is four–footed in his infancy, that is, as he moves about with his two feet and his two hands at the same time: two-footed, however, in his youth, that is, and in his manhood, that is, having only his two feet as he journeys: three-footed, however, in his old age and infirmity, that is, having his two feet and his staff as he journeys. And when I had explained those riddles, we fought a fierce, wary, vigorous duel, and the monster died from that in the end.'

It is curious, however, that although the structure of this narrative is very similar to that of the Mythographer's, there are differences which cannot be accounted for through any known Latin source of the Oedipus myth. For example, in the Latin version above, the riddle asked by the Sphinx is 'quid primo iiii deinde iii deinde ii deinde iii deinde iiii graditur pedibus' ('what has first four then three then two then three then four steps by foot') (VM II, 230.12–14), whereas the question in the Irish translation is slightly different: 'Cade int anmanda cetharchosta, dechosta, trechosta?' ('What is the four-footed, two-footed, and three-footed animal?') (*TnT*, 159–60). The answer to the riddle is then given in detail in *TnT*, 164–70, whereas the Mythographer only tells the reader that 'quod Oedipus soluens' ('Oedipus solved the riddle') (VM II, 230.15).[389] Given that the Sphinx's riddle in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* appears to be

[389] See Punzi, pp. 36–37.

closer to a version found in Apollodorus's *Library* (see below), it seems possible that the riddle in VM II's account was altered in transmission.[390]

While no known Latin source can account for the Irish version of this myth, a Greek version in Apollodorus's *Library*, III.5.8 provides the same question asked by the Sphinx and Oedipus's answer.[391] According to Apollodorus, Creon provided an edict that he would give the kingdom of Thebes to whomever solved the riddle and Oedipus stepped up to the challenge:

> ἦν δὲ τὸ αἴνιγμα· τί ἐστιν ὃ μίαν ἔχον φωνὴν2 τετράπουν καὶ δίπουν καὶ τρίπουν γίνεται [...] Οἰδίπους δὲ ἀκούσας ἔλυσεν, εἰπὼν τὸ αἴνιγμα τὸ ὑπὸ τῆς Σφιγγὸς λεγόμενον ἄνθρωπον εἶναι· γίνεσθαι γὰρ τετράπουν βρέφος ὄντα τοῖς τέτταρσιν ὀχούμενον κώλοις, τελειούμενον δὲ δίπουν, γηρῶντα δὲ τρίτην προσλαμβάνειν βάσιν τὸ βάκτρον. (*Library*, III.5.8)[392]
>
> What is that which has one voice and yet becomes four-footed and two-footed and three-footed? [...] On hearing that [Creon's edict], Oedipus found the solution, declaring that the riddle of the Sphinx referred to man; for as a babe he is four-footed, going on four limbs, as an adult he is two-footed, and as an old man he gets besides a third support in a staff.

The details of the riddle and its answer here are the same as that which appears in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. Yet, as there is ongoing debate about the extent to which Greek may have been known to medieval insular scholars, we should not assume that the medieval Irish had access to this Greek text.[393]

It seems possible to me that this account of the Sphinx's riddle and Oedipus's answer was known through scholia which followed the tradition of Hyginus's *Fabulae*, 66–67. Hyginus's *Fabulae* transmitted a version of the Oedipus myth, which covers essentially the same material as Apollodorus's account, but without the Sphinx's riddle and Oedipus's answer.[394] The *Fabulae* may have been partly derived from Greek mythographic texts, such

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[390] An adaptation of the Sphinx's riddle which follows the same format as the question set in VM II, 230 appears in *Roman de Thèbes*, ll. 279–92 and Lydgate's *The Siege of Thebes*, ll. 659–78. This version of the riddle also appears in an early modern English collection of riddles, which may imply that it was also known through oral tradition, see Archer Taylor, *English Riddles from Oral Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), p. 23 (46a).

[391] It is believed that the *Library* was written sometime between the later first century BC and the third century AD. See Stephen M. Trzaskoma, 'Introduction to Apollodorus' *Bibliotheke* (*Library*)', in *Apollodorus' Library and Hyginus' Fabulae*, ed. and trans. by R. Scott Smith and Stephen M. Trzaskoma (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2007), pp. xxix–xli (pp. xxix–xxx).

[392] Apollodorus, *The Library, Volume I: Books 1–3.9*, ed. and trans. by James G. Frazer, Loeb Classical Library 121 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921).

[393] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, pp. 34–38.

[394] See *Apollodorus' Library and Hyginus' Fabulae*, ed. and trans. by R. Scott Smith and Stephen M. Trzaskoma (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2007), pp. xii–xiv. There are many complications in attempting to date Hyginus's *Fabulae*; however, it appears to have originated from around the first to second

as Apollodorus's *Library*.[395] Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that Lactantius's commentary included material derived from the *Fabulae*.[396] The *Fabulae* has been inherited as a rather obscure source, as Alan Cameron explains:

> The surviving Latin text of the *Fabulae* was published by Iacobus Micyllus in 1535 from a single now lost manuscript in Beneventan script that he admits he found extremely difficult both to read and make sense of. The discovery of two sets of badly damaged fragments of this manuscript in 1864 and 1942 has confirmed that Micyllus treated it very freely. Obviously we cannot rely on his text. There are also two additional complications.
>
> First, the table of contents lists a number of items missing from the text itself; evidently it was compiled from a fuller text than what we now possess. Second, the excerpts copied by Ps-Dositheus diverge considerably from Micyllus's text, which is further disfigured by repetitions, doublets, and interpolations. We also find somewhat different versions in passages in the Statius scholia that appear to derive from Hyginus.[397]

Cameron's description of the *Fabulae* makes it clear that there is little certainty that these narratives, as they have survived to the modern day, reflect a true record of the work as it was circulated down the ages to the early sixteenth century. Therefore, I speculate that the variant of the Sphinx myth which appears in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* may reflect scholia which drew on a Latin version of Hyginus's myth of Oedipus and which was closer to Apollodorus's text than the one inherited. This may then have been transmitted through the Statius scholia which accompanied the *Thebaid* in the exemplar used by the Irish author.[398]

3.4.5 The question of Lactantius's lost argument

One detail in which VM II, 230 and the Middle Irish *Thebaid* differ raises questions about Edmunds's study on the life of Oedipus in the Middle Ages. VM II names Polybus as 'rex Phocidis' ('king of Phocis') (VM II, 230.5) and in contrast the Middle Irish narrative gives Polybus as the son of a king, but not yet a king himself (*TnT*, 93–95). The place from which Polybus comes is not provided in the Irish version either.[399] In the *Thebaid*, Statius does not

centuries BC, see R. Scott Smith, 'Introduction to Hyginus' *Fabulae* (Myths)', in *Apollodorus' Library and Hyginus' Fabulae*, ed. and trans. by Smith and Trzaskoma, pp. xliii–lv (pp. xlii–xliv).

[395] R. Scott Smith, 'Mythological Material and Method in the So-called "Statius scholia"', in *Writing Myth: Mythography in the Ancient World*, ed. by Stephen M. Trzaskoma and R. Scott Smith (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), pp. 165–200 (p. 171).

[396] Smith, 'Mythological Material', pp. 173–75 and Appendix A, pp. 194–99.

[397] Cameron, *Greek Mythography*, p. 35.

[398] Correspondences between non-Statian material in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* to Lactantius's commentary and Hyginus's *Fabulae* are further explored in **Chapter 4:3.1** and **Chapter 4:4.1**.

[399] Punzi argues that the omitted reference to the king of Phocis provided proof that there could be no relationship between *Roman de Thèbes* and the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, Punzi, p. 31.

directly associate Polybus with Phocis and it is possible that the Mythographer's identification of Polybus as king of Phocis was made in error.[400]

Edmunds suggests that this detail derived from Lactantius's gloss on *Thebaid*, I.64, where the reader is told: '64 POLYBO rex Phocidis fuit, qui Oedipum pro filio suo aluit' ('64 POLYBUS he was king of Phocis, he reared Oedipus as his own son') (*ISTC*, I.22–23).[401] Edmunds postulates that the transmission of this identification for Polybus in both *Roman de Thèbes* and VM II might support the argument that the authors of these works had access to the lost prose argument to Book I of Lactantius's commentary, which he presumed must also have identified Polybus as king of Phocis.[402] Based on this assumption, he puts forward the view that this lost argument may have been the source for the life of Oedipus in *Roman de Thèbes* and VM II. Conversely, Edmunds rejects the possibility that the identification of Polybus as king of Phocis could have derived from Lactantius's gloss at *Thebaid*, I.64 writing that 'it would be quite contrary to what we know of both the poet's and the mythographer's practice to assume the addition of a «learned» detail to an extensive narrative source'.[403] Therefore, while Edmunds's overall argument that the Old French and Latin mythographic accounts may have had a common source is persuasive, it is not possible to confirm that Polybus would have been described as king of Phocis in the lost argument and consequently that these two narratives derive from there.[404]

The existence of this lost argument has been identified by modern scholars through a reference in Lactantius's gloss relating to *Thebaid*, I. 61:[405]

> 61 TRAIECTUM V(VLNERE) P(LANTAS) responderat oraculum Laio, quod a filio suo posset occidi. unde natum Oedipum iussit proici transfixis cruribus. harum omnium seriem fabularum in argumento digessimus. (*ISTC*, I. 208–11)
>
> 61 HIS FEET PIERCED BY A WOUND: An oracle had informed Laius that he could be killed by his own son. So he ordered his son Oedipus to be exposed with his feet and legs transfixed. We explained this whole series of stories in the *argumentum*.[406]

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[400] For the possibility of misreading Statius's *Thebaid*, I.64 on this point, see Edmunds, 'Oedipus in the Middle Ages', pp. 41–42, n. 7. For Polybus's identity as king of Corinth see Seneca, *Tragedies: Volume 2: Oedipus; Agamemnon; Thyestes; Hercules on Oeta; Octavia*, ed. and trans. by John G. Finch, Loeb Classical Library 78 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 86–87, line 784.
[401] Edmunds, 'Oedipus in the Middle Ages', p. 141.
[402] Edmunds, 'Oedipus in the Middle Ages', p. 142.
[403] Edmunds, 'Oedipus in the Middle Ages', pp. 146–47.
[404] Edmunds, 'Oedipus in the Middle Ages', p. 141.
[405] See Paul Clogan, 'An argument of Book 1 of Statius' *Thebaid*', *Manuscripta*, 7 (1963), 30; Schmidt, p. 542; Edmunds, 'Oedipus in the Middle Ages', p. 141; Edmunds, *Oedipus*, p. 65; Punzi, p. 14; Smith, 'Mythological Material', p. 180.
[406] Translation from Smith, 'Mythological Material', p. 180.

There are prose arguments in Books II – XII of the commentary which provide a brief overview of the epic book following.[407] There is no known prose argument for Book I in the manuscripts that have transmitted the arguments for the other books of the *Thebaid*.[408] It is thought that the *argumentum* mentioned in the passage above refers to the lost argument to Book I of the commentary, and consequently provides some indication of what was contained in this short narrative, i.e. the myth of Oedipus.[409] If it was the case that the argument to Book I of Lactantius's commentary provided this myth, then it may help explain the occurrence of the summaries of the life of Oedipus present in *accessus* and commentary material in the *Thebaid* manuscript tradition.[410] However, although it is very tempting to interpret the myth of Oedipus in these medieval narratives as evidence of this lost argument, there is no firm evidence to support this.

It is not clear what Lactantius was referring to when he mentions the *argumentum*.[411] The prose arguments attributed to Lactantius for *Thebaid* Books II–XII all provide a summary of the preceding book; so, if the argument to Book I provided the myth of Oedipus, then it must have departed from the formula the commentator used for the other books by looking back on the history of Thebes. R. Scott Smith notes the possibility that the *argumentum* Lactantius referred to at I.64 and the summary to Book I may not have been the same thing, which would potentially account for this disjunction.

The manuscript tradition offers little coherence on this matter either. In the *Thebaid* manuscript tradition, the myth of Oedipus appears in the Bern-Burney *accessus* as part of a preface to the poem. In contrast, the narrative in BU R. 124 is attested as part of a mythological summary provided following the end of the poem.[412] Where the myth is attested in manuscripts of Lactantius's commentary, it was provided as supplementary information following the main body of commentary material.[413] Elsewhere, the narrative is given as a mythological preface before the text of the *Thebaid* begins.[414] The life of Oedipus, therefore, seems to have had quite a fluid relationship in the *Thebaid* manuscript tradition. Perhaps, rather than attempt to trace

[407] *ISTC*, II.1–20; III.1–17; IV.1–25; V.1–24; VI.1–15; VII.1–25; VIII.1–21; IX.1–21; X.1–24; XI.1–23; and XII.1–27.
[408] Clogan, 'An argument', p. 30.
[409] See Edmunds, 'Oedipus in the Middle Ages', pp. 140–41; Clogan, 'An argument', p. 30; and Schmidt, p. 542.
[410] H. Anderson, *Manuscripts*, III, pp. 9–10.
[411] See Smith, 'Mythological Material', p. 180.
[412] This is also the case in Genève, Bibliotheca de Genève, Lat. 96, fol. 98^{v}.
[413] I refer to the manuscripts of Lactantius's commentary alone here, rather than the manuscripts in which commentary is provided as ancilia to the *Thebaid*. See London, BL, Harley 2693, fols. 167^{v}–168^{r} and Napoli, Biblioteca Oratoriana dei Girolamini, MCF 2.14, fols. 148^{r}–150^{r}. In the latter the tale is told as part of a compendium of the Theban War.
[414] See Edinburgh, NLS, Adv.MS.18.5.12, fol. 1^{v} and Lieden, Bibliotheck der Rijksuniversiteit, BPL 136 K, fol. 15$^{r–v}$. See also H. Anderson, *Manuscripts*, I, pp. 160–62.

the myth of Oedipus in medieval narratives to Lactantius's lost argument, it is best to observe the wide variety of receptions which this short myth received in the Middle Ages and the creativity with which the narrative was adapted and expanded upon within the *Thebaid*'s manuscript tradition and the vernacular renditions of Statius's epic.

3.5 Conclusion

The identification of Statius as L. Statius Ursulus of Toulouse and the inclusion of the history of both Cadmus and Oedipus at the outset of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* appear to indicate that the translator drew on source material which circulated in the *Thebaid*'s manuscript tradition to develop his historical prologue. It is even possible that this prologue was formed from an *accessus* and mythological prefaces in the exemplar.

By developing the history of the origin of the Thebans, the Irish translator provided essential background information to the medieval reader. The translator used the Cadmus tale to draw out the dysfunctional beginnings of the city, resulting in a unique prologue which situated Thebes, added to the historical chronology of the city, and ensured the medieval reader understood the complexities of Theban ancestry, which were required to understand the *Thebaid*.

The history of Oedipus in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* has strong correlations to both the structure and text of VM II's synopsis of the Oedipus myth and it is probable that they had at least a common ancestor. The appearance of other versions of the life of Oedipus in mythological prefaces in the manuscript tradition of the *Thebaid*, which were derived from the tale of Oedipus in VM II, bears witness to a strong connection between the two. From this, I infer that it was from the medieval Irish author's exemplar of the *Thebaid* that the history of Oedipus was developed. Variations in the Irish narrative may have come from scholia in the exemplar, perhaps from Lactantius's commentary or from Hyginus's *Fabulae*. The author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* appears to have primarily used scholia from his exemplar to develop the history of Oedipus, and he can also be seen to have drawn on critical techniques from Irish literature to engage his readers. Thematic resonances between *Aided Óenfir Aífe* and the interpretation of the conflict between Laius and Oedipus in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* may also indicate that the translator drew upon native Irish narrative tradition in developing his creative response to the Latin text.

Chapter Four

'Whose line is it anyway?' Lactantius's commentary in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Lactantius and the Late Antique commentary on the *Thebaid*

The one commentary on the *Thebaid* which comes down to us from late antiquity is traditionally attributed to Lactantius Placidus. This text is a complex collection of exegesis to accompany a reading of Statius's *Thebaid*.[415] It covers a wide range of subjects, including mythography, genealogy, geography, and grammar. The initial text is believed to have been composed between AD 360 to 400, probably in Italy, but there is evidence that the commentary was also heavily reworked by a second exegete at a later date.[416] The name of the original author, Lactantius Placidus, is attested to in one of the notes (*ISTC*, VI.564–78). This attribution, however, has been called into question by modern scholars such as Alan Cameron.[417] Although Lactantius may not have been the name of the original late antique commentator, for the purposes of this thesis, I refer to the commentary as Lactantius's after the ascription in the tenth-century version of the text, which survives in München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 19482. Robert Dale Sweeney used this manuscript as the primary source for his 1997 Teubner edition and it is widely considered the most important witness to the commentary.[418]

It is believed that the commentary originally circulated as an freestanding commentary on the *Thebaid*, but was subsequently transferred into marginal, often interlinear, text alongside the epic narrative.[419] Sweeney summizes that,

> [T]he commentary of Lactantius Placidus was composed in late antiquity as a commentary, somewhat later broken up, conceivably in the archetype of the *Thebaid*, into marginal scholia, and so transmitted until perhaps the eighth century, at point in which tradition the lemmata was probably lost and then restored, in great part

[415] The Late Antique commentary on Statius's *Achilleid* is also sometimes attributed to Lactantius, but this attribution is problematic, see Sweeney, *Prolegomena*, pp. 88–90.
[416] A list of these passages can be found in Smith, 'Mythological Material', p.167, n. 13.
[417] Cameron, *Greek Mythography*, pp. 313–16. See also Smith, 'Mythological Material', p. 168.
[418] Sweeney, *Lactantius Placidus*.
[419] Sweeney, *Prolegomena*, pp. 84–85 and Helen Kaufmann, 'Papinius Noster: Statius in Roman Late Antiquity', in *Brill's Companion to Statius*, ed. by Dominik, Newlands, and Gervais, pp. 481–96 (p. 491).

> correctly. At this critical juncture in the history of so many classical texts the text was probably again reconstituted as a commentary and then dispersed, sometimes as marginal scholia, sometimes as commentary, among various manuscripts of the *Thebaid* in northern France and central Germany, with one particularly good manuscript going to Bavaria, whence copies were made for various Bavarian monasteries.[420]

The commentary survives in a range of manuscript witnesses from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries, demonstrating that it was transmitted in the Middle Ages as both a freestanding commentary and as marginalia and/or interlinear glosses to the *Thebaid*.[421] Marginalia was, however, the most common format for transmission and the majority of *Thebaid* manuscripts attesting to the commentary which have survived to the modern day are heavily annotated.[422] The complex history of the commentary, particularly difficulties relating to the integrity of the text, is well known among scholars.[423] Indeed, the Middle Irish *Thebaid* itself may demonstrate the fluidity of the commentary in transmission and the difficulties of ascribing passages of the translation text to such a complex source.

4.1.2 Medieval commentaries on the *Thebaid*

Although not included in the following discussion, it is worth noting that two other commentaries on the *Thebaid* emerged around the twelfth century. The first, the *In principio* commentary, named after the incipit to its *accessus*, was composed in northern France and has been linked with Hilary of Orléans.[424] The *In Principio*, which is known to have integrated much of Lactantius, was transmitted both whole and as marginal notes.[425] Copeland highlights how Lactantius was appropriated for allegorical purposes in this text, which assimilates the classical text as an *integumentum* ('integument'), 'a covering of poetic fiction under which the author concealed his true philosophical purpose, and which awaits the skilled attention of the exegete who will draw back the covering to expose the true meaning that the author

[420] Sweeney, *Prolegomena*, pp. 84–85.
[421] See H. Anderson, *Manuscripts*, I, pp. xxiv–xxv; Sweeney, *Prolegomena*, pp. 10–18; and Paul M. Clogan, 'The Manuscripts of Lactantius Placidus' Commentary on the *Thebaid* (1)', *Scriptorium*, 22 (1968), 87–91.
[422] Rita Copeland, 'Gloss and Commentary', in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Latin Literature*, ed. by Ralph Hexter and David Townsend (Oxford: OUP, 2012), pp. 171–91 (p. 180).
[423] See Smith, 'Mythological Material', p. 165, and Copeland, 'Gloss and Commentary', p. 180.
[424] Copeland, 'Gloss and Commentary', p. 180.
[425] See H. Anderson, *Manuscripts*, I, pp. xxv–xxvi and Copeland, 'Gloss and Commentary', pp. 180–83.

intended'.[426] The second commentary is a short allegorical exposition on the *Thebaid*, known as the *Super Thebaiden*, which has been transmitted in two manuscripts.[427] For a long time, this commentary was attributed to the sixth-century mythographer, Fabies Planciades Fulgentius; but Brian Stock's research in the early 1970s highlighted that a composition date of AD 1120–80 is more realistic, based on the type of literary techniques and methodology that its author employs.[428] There is also an unedited *Thebaid* commentary in a twelfth-century manuscript at Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliotek 1757 II, which Mark Olsen considers to be distinctive.[429] H. Anderson describes this text as 'a paraphrase and abbreviation of the commentary of Lactantius Placidus'.[430]

4.1.3 Modern scholarship to date on the use of Lactantius's commentary in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*

The addition of explanatory information in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* is commonplace. Unlike Lactantius's commentary on the *Thebaid*, which was transmitted largely in marginal form, exegesis in the Irish vernacular text was incorporated into the main narrative. Several modern scholars have briefly touched upon the correspondence between additions in the translation text and Lactantius's commentary. Meyer identifies seven instances in the translation where the commentary may have been used to clarify to Statius's meaning: Sciron (*TnT*, 255–62; cf. *Thebaid*, I.333 and *ISTC*, I.1033–37); Semele (*TnT*, 776–86; cf. *Thebaid*, I.12 and I. 292–93, and *ISTC*, I.45–57 and II.794–801); Tiresias (*TnT*, 1624–36; cf. *Thebaid*, IV.408 and *ISTC*, II.307–21 and IV.953–55); Sthenoboea and Bellerophon (*TnT*, 1688–95; cf. *Thebaid*, IV.589 and *ISTC*, IV.1436–64); Semele and the birth of Bacchus (*TnT*, 1719–25; cf. *Thebaid*, IV.655 and *ISTC*, I. 45–57, II.794–801 and IV.1636–37); a note on the custom observed for women not to be seen in public until they were married (*TnT*, 2647–48 cf. *Thebaid*, VII.243–45 and *ISTC*, VII.477–79); and the identification of Antigone as the sister of Polynices and Eteocles (*TnT*, 2645–46; cf. *Thebaid*, VII.244 and *ISTC*, VII.480).[431] Punzi attributes the extended

[426] Copeland, 'Gloss and Commentary', p. 183 and Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation*, pp. 80–81. See also Battles, pp. 6–12 and D. Anderson, 'Mythography or Historiography?', 113–39.
[427] See H. Anderson, *Manuscripts*, I, pp. xxvi–xxvii and Battles, pp. 10–12.
[428] Brian Stock, 'A Note On *Thebaid* Commentaries: Paris, B.N., lat. 3012', *Traditio*, 27 (1971), 468–71. See also Gregory Hays, 'The Pseudo-Fulgentian *Super Thebaiden*', in *Vertis in usum. Studies in Honour of Edward Courtney*, ed. by John F. Miller, Cynthia Damon, K. Sara Myers (Leipzig: K. G. Saur München, 2002), pp. 200–18.
[429] Munk Olsen, Birger, *L'étude des auteurs classique latins aux Xie et XIIe siècles*, 4 vols (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1982-2009), IV.2, p. 104.
[430] H. Anderson, *Manuscripts*, I, p. 466.
[431] Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish Version of the *Thebaid*', pp. 696–97.

narrative on Tydeus's fratricide of Meleager (*TnT*, 348–65) to Lactantius as part of her discussion on the use of scholia by the Middle Irish *Thebaid*'s translator.[432] Edwards adds three further examples where the commentary was used to amplify or explain Statius's text: male friends (*TnT*, 441–43; cf. *Thebaid*, I.475–77 and *ISTC*, I.1415–17); Thersander (*TnT*, 4708; cf. *Thebaid*, XII.348 and *ISTC*, XII.216–19); and Misericordia (*TnT*, 4762–63; cf. *Thebaid*, XII.481–82 and *ISTC*, XII.291–94).[433]

As evidence of other forms of internal glossing, Edwards also noted the identification of Diana as the cause of Dryas's death in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* at lines 3831–34.[434] I argue in **Chapter 4:3.4** that this text also corresponds to Lactantius's commentary (cf. *Thebaid*, IX.875–76 and *ISTC*, IX.777–81). Miles also notes that the influence of Lactantius's commentary can be been found elsewhere in medieval Irish literature and observes connections to it in his commentary on the *Riss*.[435] Indeed, medieval Irish scholars may not have limited themselves to using Lactantius to adapt classical epic narratives. In *Heroic Saga*, Miles suggests possible links between this commentary and the development of the 'watchman device' in the episode titled *Toichim na mBuiden* in *Táin Bó Cúailnge*.[436]

The technique of combining an exposition of Statius's verses with commentary material strikes a chord with Copeland's argument that one of the predominant approaches to translation in the Middle Ages was through the grammatical art of *enarratio poetarum* ('the interpretation of the poets').[437] *Enarratio poetarum* was essentially the concept of exposition and interpretation within the wider discipline of *grammatica*, inherited and developed from the classical era.[438] Commentaries, such as those of Lactantius and Servius, were products of *enarratio* ('interpretation') themselves. Copeland observes how early medieval vernacular translators, such as Notker III of St. Gall, broke down the boundaries of what was understood by *enarratio*: 'by translating text and existing commentary as one, the vernacular seams the two together to form a new textual organism'.[439] This new form of text is defined by Copeland as 'primary translation', whereby the translator has taken on the authorial functions of exegesis, 'becoming glossator, expositor, mythographer, and compiler'.[440] These are functions

[432] Punzi, pp. 41–42.
[433] Edwards, 'Medieval Statius', p. 501.
[434] Edwards, 'Medieval Statius', p. 501
[435] Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*, 67–112.
[436] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, pp. 175–93.
[437] Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation*, pp. 56–62.
[438] Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation*, pp. 56–62. See also Martin Irvine with David Thomson, '*Grammatica* and literary theory', *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Vol. 2*, ed. by Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), pp. 15–41.
[439] Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation*, p. 101
[440] Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation*, p. 107.

which the use of commentary in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* can be seen to reflect in many of the examples examined in this chapter.

4.2 The use of Late Antique commentaries in other medieval Irish adaptations of classical literature

In *Heroic Saga*, Miles argues that antique commentary, such as that preserved in Servius Danielis on the *Aeneid*, formed part of the Irish translator's creative response to pseudo-Dares' *De Excidio Troiae Historia* in developing *Togail Troí*.[441] He warns against viewing this type of material as secondary to the narrative, emphasising instead how the Irish author used scholastic sources to transform his models, through the technique known as *imitatio*.[442] The concept of *imitatio* ('imitation') was known to medieval scholars from the works of Roman poets and grammarians, such as Horace and Quintilian.[443] The authors of other adaptations of classical epic in medieval Ireland are also known to have used commentaries and glosses on their texts to develop their narratives. Miles, Meyer, Poppe, and Cillian O'Hogan have all underlined the importance of Lucan scholia to the development of *In Cath Catharda*, the Middle Irish prose adaptation of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.[444] O'Hogan considers commentary material so integral to the development of *In Cath Catharda* that he suggests that the narrative, 'with its close following of the Latin original and its diligent incorporation of material that would help illustrate, clarify, or explain *De Bello Civilli*, is perhaps the best example of a scholarly Irish approach to translation'.[445] Poppe, too, notes how useful scholia would have been to the Irish redactor, particularly for understanding and expanding upon the narrative.[446] He emphasises how the explanatory approach reflects the redactor's translational needs to provide clarity around Lucan's 'compressed and complex style'.[447] O'Hogan and Poppe's respective studies demonstrate that exposition was an essential tool in adapting *In Cath Catharda* for its medieval Irish audience.

To date, the use of Lactantius's commentary in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* has received little critical attention. With this in mind, the purpose of this chapter is to investigate further the examples which Meyer, Punzi, and Edwards have brought to attention and to add in some

[441] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, pp. 66–94.
[442] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 94 and pp. 99–102.
[443] Copeland provides an excellent overview of the role of imitation in Roman translation practice, see Copeland, *Rhetoric Hermeneutics and Translation*, pp. 21–33.
[444] Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish version of the *Pharsalia*', pp. 358–59; O'Hogan, 21–49; Miles, 'The Literary Set Piece', pp. 66–80; Poppe, 'Scholia', 431–39.
[445] O'Hogan, p. 49.
[446] Poppe, 'Scholia', p. 432.
[447] Poppe, 'Scholia', p. 432.

of my own. In the first section, I investigate how a number of additions to the Middle Irish *Thebaid* correspond to Lactantius's commentary and can be shown to have relied, either directly or indirectly, on this tradition of scholia. Are these additions simple translations of Lactantius's commentary, or do they reveal a more creative response from the translator? In the second section, I explore instances where the relationship between additional material in the vernacular and Lactantius's commentary is problematic and diverges from the known tradition. What other source material might this indicate that the translator had access to? Finally, I consider the extent of the evidence for the use of Lactantius's commentary in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. Throughout this chapter, I consider what the Irish author's employment of commentary material might reveal about his techniques for translation.

4.3 Locating Lactantius in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*

From the examples given above (**Chapter 4:1:3**), it seems that there is substantial evidence to show that Lactantius's commentary was available to the Irish translator. However, the passages highlighted by Meyer, Punzi and Edwards are only briefly mentioned in their research and the evidence has yet to be examined in detail. Demonstrating the relationship between the two texts often requires close readings in order to establish to what the translator was responding. Therefore, in this section, close readings are used to reveal how a range of exegesis from Lactantius is reflected in the vernacular.

4.3.1 Male friends: *TnT*, 440–43 (cf. *Thebaid* I.474–77)

After Adrastus interrupts the fight between Polynices and Tydeus in *Thebaid*, I.435–46, Statius depicts the king of Argos encouraging the men to join hands in friendship (I.468–73). The poet then proceeds to offer examples of men known for their loyalty and friendship,

> siquidem hanc perhibent post vulnera iunctis
> esse fidem, quanta partitum extrema protervo
> Thesea Pirithoo, vel inanem mentis Oresten
> opposito rabidam Pylade vitasse Megaerem. (*Thebaid*, I.474–77)
>
> For 'tis said that after these wounds they were bonded in such loyalty as made Theseus share the worst with reckless Pirithous, or Pylades face Megaera's fury to shield a maddened Orestes.

In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, an expanded list of friends is given within Adrastus's speech to the men:

> '[U]air is iad seo da fher dec rop ferr comaltus 7 comand isin bith .i. Achilles 7 Patrocolus 7 Orestis 7 Pilades 7 Nisus 7 Eorialus 7 Castur 7 *Pullux 7 Tesisius* 7 Pirathous 7 Polinices 7 Tid.' (*TnT*, 440–43)
>
> '[F]or these twelve men were the best in close friendship and fellowship in the world, that is, Achilles and Patroclus, Orestes and Pylades, Nisus and Euryalus, Castor and *Pollux, Theseus* and Pirithous, Polynices and Tydeus.'

As Edwards notes, this amplification of Statius's narrative appears to rely on Lactantius's commentary to *Thebaid*, I.474–76.[448] Although much of Lactantius's extensive note is taken up with explaining Statius's references to Theseus and Pirithous and Pylades and Orestes, an expanded list of friendships is also included:

> 474–476 [...] quattuor namque amicitiarum exempla fuisse certissimum est: Thesei et Pirithoi, Orestes et Pyladis, Achillis et Patrocli, Tydei et Polynicis. (*ISTC*, I.1415–17)
>
> 474–476 [...] For it is most certain that these were four examples of friendships: Theseus and Pirithous, Orestes and Pylades, Achilles and Patroclus, Tydeus and Polynices.

Both the Middle Irish narrative and Lactantius's commentary introduce their material in a similar way: focusing on the number of examples to be given. However, the accounts differ in their numbering of these men. The former highlights 'da fher dec' ('twelve men') (*TnT*, 440) whose friendships were most intimate, while Lactantius gives four examples, which total eight men. Although additional men were listed in the Irish translation, the Irish author still ends his list with the friendship of Polynices and Tydeus as Lactantius did. By doing so, the author created a smooth route back to the Theban narrative for the reader.

The question arises as to whether the Irish author expanded Lactantius's list or whether it was developed from a different source? The additional men in the Middle Irish version are Nisus and Euryalus and Castor and Pollux. The inclusion of Nisus and Euryalus in the vernacular may indicate another possible source for the list. For instance, a more extensive list of close friends including Nisus and Euryalus is found in Hyginus's *Fabulae*, 257. However, Castor and Pollux are not included in Hyginus's list. Therefore, it seems possible that, rather than finding these names in Lactantius's commentary or other scholia, the translator of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* appended the names of Nisus and Euryalus and Castor

[448] Edwards, 'Medieval Statius', p. 501.

and Pollux into the list from his own knowledge of the literary narratives in which these characters appear.[449]

That the translator knew the story of Nisus and Euryalus, characters from Virgil's *Aeneid*, is highlighted elsewhere in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. At the end of the episode relating the deaths of Hopleus and Dymas, in which the men attempt to retrieve the bodies of Parthenopaeus and Tydeus (*TnT*, 3975–4038), Nisus and Euryalus are referenced:

> Cid tra acht rothuitsed amlaid sin .i. Opleiius 7 Dimus, tre cuibdi a comaid amal rothuitset tall Nisus 7 Euriallus do Throigiandaib a marloinges Aeniass antan romarbsad munter Tuirn an darna[450] fer dib[451], amal indister ar loinges Aenias. (*TnT*, 4034–38)
>
> At all events they fell in that way, that is, Hopleus and Dymas, through the harmony of their friendship, as fell Nisus and Euryalus of the Trojans long ago, in the great voyage of Aeneas, when Turnus's followers had killed one of them, as is told in the voyage of Aeneas.

At the corresponding text in the *Thebaid*, X.445–48, Statius addresses Hopleus and Dymas in an apostrophe. The poet praises the men and compares their commemoration in his verses to the longevity of the memory of Nisus and Euryalus.[452] In doing so, Statius makes a direct allusion to the Nisus and Euryalus episode in the *Aeneid*, IX.176–449, on which he modelled his episode of Hopleus and Dymas.[453]

The Irish translator's response to Statius's epitaph is to develop an exposition on the death of Hopleus and Dymas, before following the poet in comparing their demise to that of Nisus and Euryalus. In contrast to Statius, who expected his readers to understand his allusion to the *Aeneid*, the vernacular author provides the reader with the information explaining who

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[449] Cf. On a larger scale, the author of *Togail Troí* appears to have used a similar technique to develop the material on Hercules' Labours (*TTH*, 38–64 and *TTLL*, 372–472). The lists of Hercules' Labours in both the first and second recensions appear to have been originally developed from Virgil's *Aeneid*, Book VIII, but were probably revised and corrected using additional sources over time. See Miles, *Heroic Saga*, pp. 81–84 and Myrick, pp. 122–25.

[450] Calder's edition gives 'dara' here; however, this is an error as Adv.MS.72.1.8 has 'darna'.

[451] The words 'antan romarbsad munter Tuirn an darna fer dib' ('when Turnus's followers had killed one of them') seem incongruous given that the context of comparison is the death of both Nisus and Euryalus.

[452] Statius echoes Virgil's sentiments at *Aeneid*, IX.446–49: 'Fortunati ambo! si quid mea carmina possunt, | nulla dies umquam memori vos eximet aevo, | dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum | accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit' ('Happy pair! If aught my verse avail, no day shall ever blot you from the memory of time, so long as the house of Aeneas shall dwell on the Capitol's unshaken rock, and the Father of Rome hold sovereign sway!'). See Virgil, *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid*, ed. and trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough, 2 vols (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1916; repr. 1986), II.

[453] A range of secondary sources discuss the allusion; for instance, Vessey, p. 116; Ganiban, p. 3; Robert D. Williams, ed. with commentary, *Statius. Thebaidos. Liber decimus* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), pp. 76–86.

the heroes from the Voyage of Aeneas were and how they died.[454] The reference implies the translator's familiarity with Virgil's epic in either the original Latin, or the Middle Irish adaptation, *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, or both.[455]

The reference to Castor and Pollux may also have been drawn from the Irish author's wider knowledge of classical epic narratives.[456] These two are somewhat out of place on the list of friends above as they are the only ones who are brothers; a disjunction which may indicate their late inclusion to the group. The characters were probably known to the translator from *Togail Troí*, where Castor and Pollux are constantly portrayed together and championed as great Greek warriors.[457] Therefore, perhaps it was their dual role as Greek kings and champions that led the translator to add their names to the list of male friends.

Intriguingly, a slightly reordered version of the same list of friends from the Middle Irish *Thebaid* appears in the medieval Irish narrative *Geinimain Aichill 7 a Macgnima*, which was adapted from Statius's *Achilleid*.[458] Here, the list is used to emphasise the strength of Achilles and Patroclus's friendship when Achilles is forced to part from his friend,

> Ar is iat so da fer dec[459] romultus 7 comund isin bith .i. Aichil 7 Patroculus, Teis 7 Periotus, Oiristeis 7 Paladies, Tetheus 7 Pollaniceis, Castor 7 Pullux, Nisus 7 Berialus.[460]
>
> For these were the twelve men [whose close friendship and fellowship were closest above all], that is, Achilles and Patroclus, Theseus and Pirithous, Orestes and Pylades, Tydeus and Polynices, Castor and Pollux, Nisus and Euryalus.

In this version of the list, Castor and Pollux and Nisus and Euryalus are the last to be named. This demonstrates that the order of names did not remain static between narratives and highlights the creative freedom that the medieval Irish author had to repurpose and alter his source material.

It seems unlikely that the authors of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and *Geinimain Aichill 7 a macgnima* would have considered there to be anything unusual in their incorporating lists

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[454] There is no corresponding commentary in Lactantius for these lines of the *Thebaid*.
[455] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 63. The tale of Nisus and Euryalus appears in *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, 2059–2162.
[456] Although Statius refers to Castor at *Thebaid*, IV.214–16 and VI.326–29, Pollux at *Thebaid*, VI.740–42, and includes one of the brothers in the Argonauts at *Thebaid*, V.407, neither their fraternal bond nor their friendship is emphasised in the epic.
[457] For example, see *TTLL*, 294–96 and 1090–1102.
[458] See Ó hAodha, 83–138.
[459] There appears to be an omission here; see Ó hAodha, p. 112. Ó hAodha uses the corresponding text from the Middle Irish *Thebaid* to fill in this omission in his English translation. I use square brackets to show the section of the quote from the Middle Irish *Thebaid* which I have updated to reflect this borrowing.
[460] Ó hAodha, pp. 112–13.

into their narratives in this fashion. This type of practice is well attested in native medieval Irish narratives. For example, the lists of *cleasa* ('feats') attributed to Cú Chulainn and which reappear in different contexts within several Irish native narratives.[461] This includes the lists of feats given before Cú Chulainn encounters Cúr mac Da Lath in *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, which differ in content between *TBC-1*, 1712–19, and *TBC-LL*, 1833–38.[462]

In the case of the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, it seems likely to me that the medieval Irish translator expanded upon Lactantius's commentary to include Nisus and Euryalus and Castor and Pollux in the list of friends either to demonstrate his knowledge of the texts in which these characters are found, or to encourage his readers to view Polynices and Tydeus's friendship within the wider framework of classical tales. The inclusion of these characters in the list of male friends in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* is itself indicative of the translator's own engagement with the wider literary context.

4.3.2 Apollo the 'flock shepherd': *TnT*, 2314–25 (cf. *Thebaid*, VI.370–83)

During the funeral games in *Thebaid* Book VI, the god Apollo is emotionally torn over which of the mortal kings, Admetus and Amphiaraus, he should favour in the chariot race. When he sees the men standing together ready to race (VI.370–72) the god provides a soliloquy, contemplating the men's standing (VI.373–83). In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, Apollo's explanation of how he knows the two men (*Thebaid*, VI.375–39) was removed from his soliloquy and added to the description of who he is looking at before the soliloquy begins (*TnT*, 2317–20). This information is underlined to show the move.

noscit cunctos, et forte propinqui | constiterant Admetus et Amphiaraus in arvo. | tunc secum: 'quisnam iste duos, fidissima Phoebi | nomina, commisit deus in discrimina reges? | ambo pii carique ambo; nequeam ipse priorem | dicere. Peliacis hic cum famularer in arvis | (sic Iovis imperia et nigrae volvere Sorores), | tura dabat famulo nec me sentire minorem | ausus; at hic	Et atchondairc uad na Grecu forin moig mor reid ara rabadar; 7 robai ac tobairt aichni ar cach oen ba leith dib, 7 adchondairc andsin Admeit ri na Tesailli, 7 Ampiaraus uasalsacart, 7 bad caraid cumtha am dosum in dias sin. Uair robui 'na haegairi thret do fhir dib .i. do Emit, intan rohath[ch]uired asa deacht é, 7 na sacart uasal idbarta dó[463] Ampiaraus. Et o rabui ag fegad amlaid sin,

[461] See William Sayers, 'Martial Feats in the Old Irish Ulster Cycle', *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 9, 1 (1983), 45–80 (p. 47).
[462] See *Táin Bó Cúailnge, Recension 1*, ed. and trans. by Cecile O'Rahilly (Dublin: Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies, 1976, repr. 2006) (hereafter *TBC-1*) and *Táin Bó Cúailnge from the Book of Leinster*, ed. and trans. by Cecile O'Rahilly (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1984) (hereafter *TBC-LL*).
[463] I follow Calder's reading of 'to him'. Calder's edition and the text in Adv.MS.72.1.8 lacks the lenition mark which I have added here to make better sense of this sentence. Lenition marks are often lacking in Adv.MS.72.1.8, but the scribe of the Egerton 1781 text does include this one (fol. 106^{r} 35).

tripodum comes et pius artis alumnus | aetheriae. potior meritis tamen ille; sed huius | extrema iam fila colu. datur ordo senectae | Admeto serumque mori; tibi nulla supersunt | gaudia, nam Thebae iuxta et tenebrosa vorago. | scis miser, et nostrae pridem cecinere volucres.' (*Thebaid*, VI.370–83)	is ed roraid: 'Cia iter,' ar se, 'in dea rogres na caraid-sea uil acum-sa dochum chathaig[t]i na Tebi? 7 gid ed rafuil soni ngrada acum uar in dis [s]in, uair is tigerna 7 is cara bunaid Adiemit, ri na Tesailli. Ampiaraus, immorro, rofitir fein ga[ch] ni asfas dochair ind.' (*TnT*, 2314–25)
He knows them all, and by chance Admetus and Amphiaraus stood close together in the field. Then to himself: 'Who is the god that has joined the two kings, Phoebus' most faithful names, in rivalry? Both are pious, both beloved; I could not say myself which stands first. One, when I was a serf in Pelion's fields (so Jupiter's commands and the dark sisters would have it), gave incense to his thrall and dared not feel me his inferior; the other is companion of tripods and pious disciple of ethereal skill. Yet the first has preference by his deserts; but the other's thread is at the distaff's end. To Admetus is given old age's course and a late death; for you no joys are left, for Thebes is at hand and the dark chasm. You know it, unhappy one, and our birds have long so sung.'	And he saw in the distance the Greeks upon the great smooth plain on which they were; and he was able to recognise each of them apart, and he saw there Admetus king of the Thessalians, and Amphiaraus the noble priest, and those two were indeed intimate friends to him. For he had been a flock shepherd to one of them, that is, Admetus, when he had been divested of his godhead; and Amphiaraus was a noble sacrificing priest to him. And when he was so gazing, this is what he said: 'Who indeed,' said he, 'is the god that has urged these two friends of mine to the war against Thebes? And yet I have a partiality of love for these two, for Admetus king of Thessaly is lord and true friend. Amphiaraus, however, himself knows everything of misfortune that will arise in that [war].'

The explanation in the vernacular narrative was not a direct translation of Apollo's words from the *Thebaid*, however. Rather, this appears to have come from Lactantius's corresponding notes on *Thebaid*, VI.375 and VI.378–79:

> 375 [DICERE] PELIACIS (HIC CVM FAMVLARER IN ARVIS) montem Pelion in Thessalia esse notissimum est prope quem deus Apollo Admeti regis pauit armenta. constat autem huius iniuriae hanc fuisse causam: fulminato Aesculapio quod reuocare ad uitam ausus fuisset Hippolytum, pater Apollo, ubi se uidit orbatum, sagittis Cyclopas occidit qui Iouis fulmina fabricare consueuerant. ob hoc mortalem indutus formam pecus Admeto iuxta fluuium pauit Amphrysum.
>
> 378–379 AT HIC TRIPODUM COMES (ET PIVS ARTIS ALVMNVS / AETHERIAE) Amphiaraus scilicet. (*ISTC*, VI.589–99)
>
> 375 [TO SAY] ONE WHEN I WAS A SERF IN PELION'S FIELDS mount Pelion in Thessaly is most well known to be near where the god Apollo grazed a herd for the king Admetus. Indeed, it is known that this was the cause of his offense: because Aesculapius was struck by lightning for calling back to life Hippolytus, his father Apollo, when he saw that he was bereaved, he killed with his arrows the Cyclops who had been accustomed to make Jupiter's thunderbolts. In payment for this, he put on a mortal form [and] near the river Amphrysius grazed sheep for Admetus.

> 378–379 THE OTHER IS COMPANION OF TRIPODS AND PIOUS DISCIPLE OF ETHEREAL SKILL evidently Amphiaraus.

The wider story, which explains how Apollo came to be in mortal form and ended up tending the sheep in Admetus's fields, does not appear in the Middle Irish account. This seems to demonstrate that the translator was not simply copying Lactantius's notes into his narrative.

The details in the Irish vernacular text explaining that Admetus was 'ri na Tesailli' ('king of the Thessalians') (*TnT*, 2317), and that Apollo had been a flock shepherd to him (*TnT*, 2318–19) seem to have been drawn from the commentary. The description that Apollo had been divested of his godhead (*TnT*, 2319) echoes Lactantius's exegesis that the god's punishment for killing the Cyclops was that 'mortalem indutus formam' ('he put on a mortal form') (VI.596) to tend Admetus's sheep. The identification of Amphiaraus as the priest to whom Apollo refers at *Thebaid*, VI.378–79, is, as Lactantius observes (VI.599), quite evident. However, both Lactantius and the Middle Irish translator clarify this reference and it seems likely that the latter followed the former in this action.

4.3.3 Crotopus: *TnT*, 546 (cf. *Thebaid*, I.634–35)

In *Thebaid* Book I, Adrastus explains to Polynices and Tydeus the reason behind the rites and worship of Apollo at Argos (I.557–720). His tale includes Apollo's love and rape of the daughter of the Greek king, Crotopus, and the tragic death of Apollo's son by the daughter, who remains unnamed (I.576–90). After Crotopus had his daughter killed for her involvement with the god, Apollo avenged her death by sending a monstrous beast, half woman and half serpent, to eat the newborn babies of the city (I.601–04). A hero by the name of Coroebus rid the city of the beast, only for Apollo to send a pestilence down on Argos (I.605–33).

In despair, the leader of the city asks the cause: 'quaerenti quae causa duci, quis ab aethere laevus | ignis et in totum regnaret Sirius annum' ('Their lord asks the reason: what the sinister fire from heaven, why Sirius reigned all the year round?') (*Thebaid*, I.634–35). The Middle Irish translator provides, 'ri Grec' ('a Greek king') (*TnT*, 545) for Statius's *dux* ('leader'), but also notes, '.i. Crotopus' ('that is, Crotopus') (*TnT*, 546). This mirrors Lactantius's short note at *Thebaid*, I.634 'DUCI Crotopo' ('THEIR LORD Crotopo') (*ISTC*, I.1732). By providing the king's name, the translator clarified who Statius was referring to at this point in text. It is a helpful note, especially when one considers that Crotopus is only once named by the poet at *Thebaid*, I.570 (cf. *TnT*, 503).

4.3.4 The death of Dryas: *TnT*, 3831–34 (cf. *Thebaid*, IX.875–76)

At *Thebaid*, IX.841–74, Statius depicts the Theban archer Dryas causing the death of Parthenopaeus, the young Arcadian prince and favourite of the goddess Diana. As Parthenopaeus falls dying from his horse, Dryas is mortally wounded by an unknown assailant:

> tum cadit ipse Dryas (mirum!) nec vulneris umquam
> conscius: olim auctor teli causaeque patebunt. (*Thebaid*, IX.875–76)
>
> Then Dryas himself falls (strange!) nor ever knows of the wound. The weapon's sender and the reason will one day be revealed.

Despite the poet's apparent astonishment at Dryas's death, the reader should not be surprised. After Parthenopaeus's mother, Atalanta, prays to Diana to keep her son safe in battle (IX.608–635), the goddess sets out to support the Arcadian. Diana meets Apollo on the way, who tells her that Parthenopaeus's end is near and that she will not be able to change his fate (IX.650–662). Knowing she cannot save the young man, Diana vows to avenge his death (IX.663–67) declaring 'nostris fas sit saevire sagittis' ('Let my arrows too have the right to rage') (IX.667). When Statius says the perpetrator of Dryas's death and the reason behind it will one day be revealed, he appears to be at least pointing to Diana as instigator, if not the one behind the bow.[464] Therefore, Shackleton Bailey observes that the mystery Statius presents in Dryas's death is conveniently cleared up by information provided by the poet himself.[465] This reading of the passage is reflected in Lactantius's note to *Thebaid*, IX.875–76,

> a Diana intellegitur Dryas occisus, ut ipsa superius <u.667> promiserat dicens: 'et nostris fas sit saeuire sagittis.' (*ISTC*, IX.777–81)
>
> Dryas is understood to have been killed by Diana, as that woman above <u.667> promised saying: 'Let my arrows too have the right to rage.'

The commentary reveals that Lactantius interpreted Diana as Dryas's killer, his death fulfilling her promise.

In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, a more explicit description of Dryas's death is provided than the one given by Statius:

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[464] This reading of the text is challenged by Ganiban, who questions whether or not Diana really is responsible for Dryas's death; see Ganiban, pp. 129–31.
[465] Statius, *Thebaid and Achilleid*, ed. and trans. by David Roy Shackleton Bailey, ii, Loeb Classical Library 498 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 123, n. 51.

> [I]s cumai tuc Drias na hurcharu sin 7 torchair fen co dianmarb fo cétoir. Fo hingnad immorro leosum sin, uair ní fetatar cia ros-marbh. (*TnT*, 3829–31)
>
> [A]t the same time as Dryas had delivered those casts he himself fell stark dead immediately. They wondered however at that, for they did not know who had killed him.

The translator has taken Statius's authorial exclamation 'mirum!' ('strange') (*Thebaid*, IX.875) and contextualised it. Here, *mirus* is no longer a stand-alone interjection; rather, it is built upon to elucidate the astonishment of Dryas's comrades at their leader's death. While Statius only alludes to the anonymity of Dryas's killer at *Thebaid*, IX.876, the Irish author explains that Dryas's men wonder at his death because they do not know who has killed him. Therefore, it appears to be for the benefit of the reader that the culprit is identified:

> Acht chena is í Dean ros-marbh a ndigail Partanapeuis, amal rogell thúas da mathair, co ndigheolad a mac ar inti ros-marbfedh. (*TnT*, 3832–34)
>
> Nevertheless, it was Diana that killed him in revenge for Parthenopaeus; as she had promised above to his mother, that she would avenge her son upon the man who should slay him.

The Irish text here relies on Lactantius's note for *Thebaid*, IX.875–76. Lactantius's commentary has been inserted accurately into the narrative at the very point in the epic action which it refers to. The use of 'thúas' ('above') at *TnT*, 3833 appears to be a direct translation of 'superius' ('above') from *ISTC*, IX.778; so too 'rogell' ('she had promised') (*TnT*, 3833) for 'promiserat' ('she promised) (*ISTC*, IX.780). In a departure from Lactantius's commentary, however, the Irish narrative does not provide the direct quotation from *Thebaid*, IX.667; instead, the translator supplied an interpretation of Diana's words, 'nostris fas sit saevire sagittis' ('Let my arrows too have the right to rage'). At first it seems the Middle Irish reading recalls the vernacular author's own explanatory translation of Diana's words at *Thebaid*, IX.665–67:

> 'Uair is cinnti,' ar sí, 'is cóir damsa fortachta arin fer sin 7 a aife ar inti ros-muirfe.'[466] (*TnT*, 3721–22)
>
> 'Since it is a certainty,' said she, 'it is just for me to help that man, and avenge him on that one who will kill him.'

[466] Calder translates the verb 'that slew him'; however, it is reflects the future singular third person, 'who will kill him', *eDIL* s.v. *marbaid*. Calder has it listed correctly as the future tense in his glossary, see Calder, *Togail na Tebe*, p. 396.

However, the exegesis from *TnT*, 3833–34 adds the detail that Diana made this promise to Parthenopaeus's mother, which suggests that the translator understood the goddess's promise at *TnT*, 3721–22 to be a reaction to Atalanta's prayer from *TnT*, 3704–10. Therefore, while the Irish explanation of Dryas's mysterious death can be seen to have originated in Lactantius's commentary, the translator has become commentator here, providing his own interpretation of the narrative.

4.3.5 The altar of Misericordia: *TnT*, 4761–63 (cf. *Thebaid*, XII.481–83)

In the example of Apollo above (**Chapter 4:3:2**), the author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* can be seen to have been quite selective about the information he carried into the vernacular from Lactantius's commentary. Another instance demonstrating that the translator was discriminating in his use of Lactantius can be found at *TnT*, 4761–63.[467] These lines correspond to *Thebaid*, XII.481–83 where Statius portrays the Argive widows arriving at the altar to Clementia:

> Urbe fuit media nulli concessa potentum
> ara deum; mitis posuit Clementia sedem,
> et miseri fecere sacram. (*Thebaid*, XII.481–83)
>
> In the midst of the city was an altar made over to no deity of power; gentle Mercy made there her seat and the unfortunate consecrated it.

In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, the translator concentrates on explaining what the altar is for, who it is dedicated to, and where it is situated:

> [I]s and dobaí altoir alaind idbarta ar lár an baili, arna coisegrad do dee na trocairi .i. Misericordia, 7 fidnemad fhoithreamail 'ma thimcheall. (*TnT*, 4761–63)
>
> [T]here was a splendid altar for sacrifices in the middle of the place, consecrated to the goddess of mercy, that is, Misericordia, and with a forest-like sacred grove around it.

The identification of Clementia as Misericordia can be traced to Lactantius:

> 481–482 (NVLLI) CONCESSA POTENTUM / (ARA DEUM) Ἑλέου βωμόν dicit. hanc aram Cicero <locum non inueni[468]> Misecordiae nominat. eius Terentius

[467] See Edwards, 'Medieval Statius', p. 501.
[468] This is Sweeney's comment.

> meminit <Heaut. 975–976>: ‘nec tu <a>ram tibi precatorem pararis.’ (*ISTC*, XII.291–94)
>
> 481–482 AN ALTAR MADE OVER TO NO DEITY OF POWER he says ‘the altar of mercy’. This altar Cicero <I have not located the reference> names as that of Misericordia. Terence mentions this <*Heaut*. 975–976> ‘You don’t need to find an altar or someone to plead for you.’

Indeed, the vernacular author could have used either the note above to identify Statius’s Clementia as Misericordia, or Lactantius’s note to *Thebaid* XII.497–98, which explains why the deity has a seat at Athens (*ISTC*, XII.316–23). Yet, the only piece of information retained from Lactantius in the vernacular is that the altar of mercy is Misericordia.[469] Again, it is worth observing that the translator used only used a specific detail from the commentary. Lactantius quoted and referenced other authors from the Roman poetic tradition extensively in his commentary.[470] However, if the translator had access to Lactantius’s note in full, he has chosen not to include the citation from Terence or acknowledged any reference to Cicero.

4.4 Exploring the complexities of commentary material: correspondences and contradictions

The close readings of passages which contain additional information not in the *Thebaid* in the section above demonstrates that there are correspondences between the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and Lactantius’s commentary. There are occasions where Lactantius’s notes appear to have been used quite fully by the Irish translator as well as instances where he seems to have chosen to use only partial excerpts of the text. There are also numerous instances where the apparent correspondence between these texts is very problematic. In this section, I explore examples where the additional material may appear to rely on Lactantius, but contains quite different, or even contradictory, information.[471]

4.4.1 Sciron: *TnT*, 255–62, cf. *Thebaid*, I.333

Exiled from Thebes, Statius describes Polynices’ journey to Argos at *Thebaid*, I.312–89. Along the way, Polynices passes ‘infames Scirone petras’ (‘Sciron’s ill-famed cliffs’) (*Thebaid*, I.333), which is very closely translated into the Irish vernacular as ‘sech cairrgib

[469] The Irish description of the forest-like sacred grove which follows the identification of the altar derives from *Thebaid*, XII.491–92.
[470] Smith, ‘Mythological Material’, p. 175.
[471] See also **Chapter 3:4.4**, which explores the inclusion of the riddle of the Sphinx at *TnT*, 157–70.

mora michluacha Sciroin' ('past the great ill-famed rocks of Sciron) (*TnT*, 254–55). The Irish translator subsequently explained what was meant by this reference in the lines following (*TnT*, 255–62). This additional information in the translation corresponds to the location of Lactantius's elucidation on *Thebaid*, I.333. However, the exegesis provided in the Irish text does not appear to follow Lactantius.

333 INFAMES SCIRONE (PETRAS) 'notas' dixit infames, ut est <Horat. carm. I 3,20> 'infames scopulos Acroceraunia'. hic Sciron hospites suos uel transeuntes saxo residens cogebat pedes sibi lauare et eos ex improuiso praecipitabat, quem tamen Theseus dicitur peremisse. (*ISTC*, I.1033–37)	7 in Sciroin hisin ua latrand lanchalma i n-aroile carraic cocuasta ar caetib na conaire, 7 is e bes donid, gach duine rodringed isin charraic sin rofurailead-sum poccad a chos arin duine, 7 intan na bid ac pocad, dobered lua do co cuired ri hed n-imcian uada he, cein noco tanic Teis mac Eig meic Neptuin, da indsaig, co roibe ac indmad a chos. Is andsin tucastar Teis trentairring cuici air, 7 raathchuir uada é isin muir moradbail. (*TnT*, 255–62)
333 SCIRON'S INFAMOUS ROCKS The 'famous' [rocks] he calls 'infamous', as it is at <Horat. *Carm*. I 3,20> 'the infamous rocks of Acroceraunia'. Here Sciron, sitting on his rock, used to force his visitors, even those who passed by, to wash his feet and unexpectedly he used to throw them headlong [from the rocks]; however, Theseus is said to have killed him.	And in that Sciron lived a daring robber in a certain hollow rock at the meetings of the road. And this is the custom he practised, upon every man that climbed into that rock he would command them to kiss his feet: and when he was not kissing them, he would give him a kick so as to hurl him a great distance away, until Theseus, son of Aegeus, son of Neptune came to him, so that he was engaged in washing his feet. Then Theseus gave him a strong pull towards himself, and hurled him into the great vast sea.

The two passages reveal several differences. Lactantius's interpretation begins with a note guiding readers to Horace's *Odes*, I.3.20, to which Statius may have been alluding.[472] There is no indication of this citation in the Irish vernacular. Indeed, although the identification of the altar of Misericordia in **Chapter 4:3.5** appears to derive from a Cicero citation in the commentary, for the most part, citations from and references to the works of other authors, such as Vergil, Lucan, and Ovid, who were all frequently quoted or referenced by Lactantius, do not appear in the Irish *Thebaid*.[473] Whether this was because the source material that the Irish author worked from did not include this information, or because he chose not to incorporate it, we will probably never know.

[472] Presumably Lactantius was pointing to similarity of the construction 'infames Scirone petras' at *Thebaid*, I.333 to Horace's *Odes*, I.3.20, 'infames scopulos Acroceraunia'. There does not appear to be a connection between Acroceraunia and the myth of Sciron.
[473] For the number of citations of other authors in Lactantius's commentary, see Smith, 'Mythological Material', p. 175.

There are further contrasts: Lactantius identifies Sciron as the person behind the act of persuading his visitors to wash his feet and then throwing them off the rock, whereas the Irish author does not appear to be aware that Sciron was a person and identifies Sciron instead as the place at which a daring robber lived. He then describes how it was the custom of this robber to order passers-by to kiss his feet so that he could then kick them a long distance away; a detail which appears to be unique to the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. It is not found in any of the known Latin versions of this tale, including Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (VII.443–47) and Hyginus's *Fabulae* (38.12–15). The narratives from VM I and VM II agree with Lactantius's commentary, that Sciron forced passers-by to wash his feet (VM I, 164 and VM II, 150).

It is unclear why the Irish author chose to depict the robber at Sciron demanding passers-by kiss his feet rather than wash them. The narrative is also inconsistent in how this request is portrayed; for when Theseus encounters the robber, he is asked to wash the robber's feet rather than kiss them. Perhaps the translator deemed the portrayal of a king, such as Theseus, kissing the feet of the robber to be inappropriate and so choose not to depict this.[474] Alternatively, it may be that translator was distracted in his work and consequently gave 'indmad' ('washing') (*TnT*, 260), following his exemplar, rather than continuing his invention in providing 'poccad' ('kissing') (*TnT*, 258). Even so, one wonders why the Irish author chose to portray the robber requesting passers-by to kiss, rather than wash his feet.

It may be that the imagery of the robber requesting his feet be kissed reflects Cistercian practices; for instance, as part of the Maundy service, the feet of the poor were kissed.[475] Indeed, perhaps the translator was familiar with the teachings of Bernard of Clairvaux (b. 1090 – d. 1153), whose Cistercian monasticism influenced the development of ecclesiastical reform in Ireland during the twelfth century.[476] In Bernard's *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum*, he describes the gesture both as part of the act of penitence for sinners, but also as an act of devotion (III.1.2).[477] In *Gestures and Looks in Medieval Narrative*, John A. Burrows emphasised that kissing a foot, like that of kissing a hand or leg, 'humbles the kisser and

[474] In the Irish narrative, Theseus's high-status appears to be emphasised by the inclusion of a patronymic and avonymic, 'Teis mac Eig meic Neptuin' ('Theseus, son of Aegeus, son of Neptune') (*TnT*, 259–60). Thus, Theseus was known to be the grandson of Neptune, *dea in mara* ('the god of the sea') (*TnT*, 2405). Further discussion on the inclusion of genealogical information in references to characters is provided in **Chapter 5:3.1** and **Chapter 5:3.2**.
[475] C. M. Woolgar, *The Senses in Late Medieval England* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 40.
[476] Marie Therese Flanagan, *The Transformation of the Irish Church in the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2010), pp. 118–68.
[477] Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 8 vols (Romae: Cistercienses; 1957–1977), i (1957), pp. 14–15.

signifies respect'.[478] Burrows notes too that kissing a foot could also be a petitionary action.[479] Bearing this in mind, one wonders if the vernacular author made the alteration from washing feet to kissing them as a perversion of this act of penitence and to show the sinfulness of the robber in making this demand of passers-by.

Another aspect of the elucidation on Sciron in the Middle Irish, which does not agree with Lactantius, is the description of this ne'er do well as 'latrand lanchalma' ('a daring robber') (*TnT*, 255–56). In the commentary, Sciron is named, but his occupation as a robber is not given. This detail in the Irish *Thebaid* may, therefore, have been developed from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the poet explains the metamorphosis of Sciron's bones into cliffs:

> sparsisque latronis
> terra negat sedem, sedem negat ossibus unda;
> quae iactata diu fertur durasse vetustas
> in scopulos: scopulis nomen Scironis inhaeret.
> (*Metamorphoses*, VII.444–47)
>
> To this robber's scattered bones both land and sea denied a resting place; but, long tossed about, it is said that in time they hardened into cliffs; and the cliffs still bear the name Sciron.

Ovid's narrative gives both the information that Sciron was a robber and specifies that the cliffs are named Sciron; details which are consistent with the explanation given about the rocks of Sciron in the Irish vernacular.

Finally, while Lactantius ends his comment 'quem tamen Theseus dicitur peremisse' ('however, Theseus is said to have killed him) (I.1037), the Irish narrative gives a fuller version of the tale, explaining how Theseus used the opportunity of washing the robber's feet to hurl him into the sea (*TnT*, 259–62). In relaying the labours of Theseus, Hyginus's *Fabulae*, 38 also offers this version of the tale:

> Scironem, qui ad mare loco quodam praerupto sedebat et qui iter gradiebatur cogebat eum sibi pedes lauare, et ita in mare praecipitabat, hunc Theseus pari leto in mare deiecit, ex quo Scironis petrae sunt dictae. (*Fabulae*, 38.11–15)
>
> Sciron, who used to sit near the sea in a certain precipitous place and would compel anyone walking on a journey to wash his feet, and thus he would throw him down headlong into the sea, this man Theseus cast down into the sea in like death, from which the rocks of Sciron are called.

[478] See John A. Burrows, *Gestures and Looks in Medieval Narrative* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), p. 53.
[479] Burrows, *Gestures and Looks*, p. 53.

The Middle Irish exegesis of Sciron's rocks seems considerably closer to Hyginus's account than Lactantius's. For instance, at the outset of the elucidation, the Irish author describes that this robber lived 'i n-aroile carraic cocuasta ar cætib na conaire' ('in a certain hollow rock at the meetings of the road') (*TnT*, 256), which may recall Hyginus's description of Sciron sitting 'loco quodam praerupto' ('in a certain precipitous place') (*Fabulae*, 38.12). Lactantius's commentary locates Sciron 'saxo residens' ('sitting on his rock') (*ISTC*, I.1035–36), but lacks the use of the pronoun *quidam* ('a certain'), which appears to link Hyginus's account with the Irish vernacular.

The exposition on Sciron in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* alerts us to the wide range of sources which may have been available to the medieval Irish translator and draws attention to the creativity employed by the translator in incorporating additional information into the narrative. The assertion that Sciron was a place rather than person suggests that on this occasion the Irish author may have misinterpreted his source material or that the information from which he developed his exegesis was incomplete.

4.4.2 The Calydonian boar and Meleager's Death: *TnT*, 348–65 (cf. *Thebaid*, I.402–03)

Statius pictures Tydeus and Polynices coincidently in exile and making their way through the same storm before seeking shelter at Argos at *Thebaid*, I.401–07. While introducing Tydeus into the scene, the poet remarks that he has been driven from Calydon through an act of fratricide:

> Ecce autem antiquam fato Calydona relinquens
> Olenius Tydeus (fraterni sanguinis illum
> conscius horror agit) eadem sub nocte sopora
> lustra terit. (*Thebaid*, I.401–04)
>
> But see! Fate makes Olenian Tydeus leave ancient Calydon, driven by guilty terror of a brother's blood, and in the slumberous night tread the selfsame wild.

The Middle Irish narrative expands upon this introduction,

> As si sin immorro oes 7 fhuair tanic Tid trom trentachrach mac Oenís .i. mac rig cuanda cathbuadach Calidone, 7 as ead roimluaid-side asa thir 7 asa thalam cusin cathraig cuanda comdaiṅgin cetna. (*TnT*, 345–48)
>
> At that time and hour, however, came mighty strong warlike Tydeus, son of Oeneus, that is, son of the fine battle-victorious king of Calydon, and this is why he had moved out from his country and his land unto this same fine strongly fortified city.

Statius's reference to 'Olenius Tydeus' ('Olenian Tydeus') (*Thebaid*, I.402) is explained and expanded upon in the vernacular text, revealing Tydeus's association with Calydon through his father the king. Statius's allusion to Tydeus's exile and guilt as a fratricide brings him into close association with Polynices: both are exiled, and, while only Tydeus has committed fratricide thus far, the reader knows that Polynices will do the same during the Theban war (*Thebaid*, I.33–41; *TnT*, 4–7).[480]

However, the translator's response to Statius's allusion to Tydeus as a fratricide leads the reader into a full description of the circumstances under which the warrior had to leave his country and city:

> Feacht n-aen dodeachaid d' fhiadach 7 d' [fh]ianchoscur ria derbrathair uoden .i. ri mac murnech morgradach Ioeinius .i. re Meliager. Et darala doib torc adbul allaid robai ac inrad in tire 7 in talman do marbad. Et as e rocet-gonastair he .i. Tid mac Oenius, 7 is leis rate a choscur 7 a chomaideam re Meliager. Et tuc a chroiceand in tuirc allaid sin da bannleannan bangaiscedaig[10] robai isint [s]elca sin .i. da Aithseannda (no Aithleannda)[481], 7 adchonnaic immorro Tid sin. Rofhiarfaig da brathair .i. da Meliager: 'Cid ma tucais croiceand in tuirc isa cetguine rocommaidius dat leandan?' 'Me da marbad 7 da mudugud, 7 is aire sin thucus di.' Asa haithli sin immorro roerich[482] Tid do chosnum in chroicind risin n-ingin, 7 rofher-sum comlund n-athlum re hAthalannda, 7 roclaeidead inn ingin andsin, 7 ruc Tid in croicend leis. O 'dchualaig immorro Meleger in gnim sin, rogab fearg 7 fuasnad mor é, 7 tanig remi da digail sin ar Thid, 7 rothoit Meliager ra brathair amlaid sin .i. re Tid, conid indsin rohechtrad 7 rohindarbad e sin. (*TnT*, 348–65)
>
> Once upon a time he [Tydeus] had gone to hunt and to kill game with his own brother, that is, with the spirited well-beloved son of Oeneus, that is, with Meleager. And they happened to kill a mighty wild boar that was devastating the country and the land. And the first to wound it was Tydeus, son of Oeneus, and to him should have fallen the victory of it and the vaunt of it before Meleager. But he gave the hide of that wild boar to his sweetheart, a female warrior who was in that hunt, that is, to Atasanda (or Atalanta); and moreover Tydeus saw that. He asked of his brother, that is, of Meleager: 'Why have you given to your sweetheart the hide of the wild boar whose first wound I vaunted?' 'It is I that killed and destroyed him, and therefore I gave it her.' Moreover, after that, Tydeus took up arms to contend for the hide against the maiden, and he fought a very fierce contest with Atalanta, and there the maiden was overthrown, and Tydeus brought the hide with him. Then when Meleager heard of that deed, anger and great violent wrath seized him, and he set out to avenge it upon Tydeus, and Meleager fell by his brother in that way, that is, by Tydeus, so that he was exiled and banished for that.

[480] See Vessey, p. 95 and Ganiban, p. 126.
[481] Calder translates only the corrected name 'Atalanta'; I include the first reference too.
[482] Calder translates 'rose up', which I change to 'took up arms', *eDIL* s.v. *éirgid*, (f).

This version of the Calydonian boar hunt is an unusual one as Tydeus is never mentioned as taking part in the Calydonian boar hunt in any of the classical sources, including Statius, who never directly places him at the event.[483]

Punzi suggests that the translator took full advantage of Lactantius's glosses on *Thebaid*, I.463, IV.111, and VIII.706 to rebuild Tydeus's tale in all its details at *TnT*, 345–65.[484] However, she overlooks the fact that the vernacular text has much more in common with Lactantius's *fabula* (a type of mythographic note) on the Calydonian boar hunt (*Thebaid*, II.469; *ISTC*, II.1267–98).[485] The other notes to which she draws attention do not appear to have been used in this elaboration at all. While it seems probable that the vernacular author used the *fabula* from the commentary to develop the narrative on Tydeus's involvement in the Calydonian boar hunt and Meleager's death, the relationship is not straightforward. Tydeus's tale in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* makes numerous departures from Lactantius's *fabula* and it seems likely to me that the vernacular version is predominantly a product of the translator's creativity combined with the outline of the Calydonian boar hunt as it appears in the commentary.

The first part of Lactantius's *fabula* (*ISTC*, II.1267–75), is not reflected in the Irish vernacular retelling of the Calydonian boar hunt above. This part of the *fabula* explains how Oeneus, the king of Aetolia, whose most famous city is Calydon, neglected to make sacrifices to Diana during the annual celebrations of the kingdom's crops. Oeneus's disregard for the goddess enraged her and she sent a huge boar to lay waste to the lands of Calydon, which the people of the kingdom named the Calydonian boar. Rather, an abbreviated version of this section of the exegesis can be found as part of a simile, which describes the Calydonian boar hunt at *TnT*, 866–79 (this is discussed in detail at **Chapter 6:5.1**). The additional information in the Irish vernacular in the simile marries up with Lactantius's commentary above to elucidate Statius's obscure reference to the Calydonian boar as 'Oeneae vindex [...] ille Dianae' ('Oenean Diana's avenger') (*Thebaid*, II.469). This implies that the translator was aware of Lactantius's exegesis of the hunt in its original location and that he chose to separate the information it contained in order to develop Tydeus's history at *TnT*, 345–65.

[483] The Latin sources include Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VIII.260–444; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 174; and Servius, *Aeneid*, VII.306. 1–5. Citations of the Servian commentaries are from *Servii Grammatici Qui Feruntur in Vergilii Carmina Commentarii*, ed. by Georg Thilo and Hermann Hagen (Cambridge: CUP, 1883). In references to the commentary I adopt Thilo and Hagen's use of italics to distinguish Servius Danielis from Servius proper.
[484] Punzi, p. 41.
[485] It has been suggested that Lactantius's *fabula* on the Calydonian boar may be a later reworking of Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 171–74; see Smith, 'Mythological Material', p. 195.

In the second part of the *fabula*, Lactantius goes on to detail how Meleager gathered the men for the Calydonian boar hunt and how Atalanta came to be the first to wound it:

> Cuius feritate Oeneus fractus edictum tale proposuit, ut dimidiam regni partem caperet qui monstrum interemisset. Meleagri uirtus periculum non expauit, siquidem eius filius undique iuuentutem collectam ad illam noui generis expeditionem uocauit. inter quos etiam Atalante conuenit, Iasii filia, summa uenatrix, quae in saltibus prima omnium praedictum aprum sagitta percussit. (*ISTC*, I.1275–82)
>
> When Oeneus was broken by its savagery, he published an edict according to which who[ever] killed the monster would get half his kingdom. The courage of Meleager did not fear the danger, seeing that his son [Oeneus's son, Meleager] gathered young men from all over and summoned them to a new type of expedition. Among the men Atalanta, the daughter of Iasus, also came, a great huntress, who in the woods was the first of them all to strike the aforesaid boar with an arrow.

There is no mention of Oeneus's edict or Meleager's role organising a band of men to hunt the boar in the Middle Irish narrative. Atalanta's role too is diminished. In Lactantius, she is the first to wound the boar, while in the vernacular this feat is attributed to Tydeus. Indeed, this section was heavily abbreviated and reworked to produce a tale focusing primarily on Tydeus and Meleager's involvement in the hunt (*TnT*, 348–53). Lactantius identifies Meleager as Oeneus's son in the *fabula* above (*ISTC*, II.1277–80) and this association may have assisted the translator in identifying Meleager as Tydeus's brother.[486] Statius's identification of Tydeus as Oeneus's son throughout the *Thebaid* may also have enabled the translator to make this connection between them.[487] This relationship is stressed throughout the Middle Irish *Thebaid* in the patronymic *Tid mac Oenius* ('Tydeus, son of Oeneus').[488] While Lactantius offers various versions of Tydeus's history, including contradictory notes on the name and his relationship with the man he killed, he never links Meleager and Tydeus as brothers.[489]

While the information that Tydeus and Meleager were brothers cannot be derived from Lactantius, other classical and medieval sources did make this connection. The men are identified as brothers in Ovid's *Heroides* IX.150–55 and VM I not only identifies them as brothers (143.1), but also says that Meleager was killed by Tydeus (195.1–3).[490] Another

[486] Lactantius later identifies Meleager as Oeneus's father (*ISTC*, I.1381–83).
[487] See *Thebaid*, I.463–65 and 669; II.686–88; III.392; IV.112–14; V.661–62; VI.870; VIII.538, 588, and 659; and X.748.
[488] See *TnT*, 352, 392, 448, 693–94, 1088, 1096–97, 1145, 1157, 1246–47, 1438, 2128, 2138, 2553, 2763, 2791, 2817, 4330–31.
[489] Lactantius identifies the man as Tydeus's brother Toxeus at *ISTC*, I.1254–55, his uncle Thoas, or Apharea at *ISTC*, I.1262–64. A later note at *ISTC*, I.1264–66 identifies Melanippus as the brother killed by Tydeus.
[490] Tydeus is also given as Oeneus's son in the Greek mythological tradition, see Homer, *Iliad*, XIV.113–18 and Apollodorus, *Library*, I.75

source for this information can be found in the *Thebaid*'s manuscript tradition. In the Bern-Burney *accessus*, as the Theban war is introduced at the end of Oedipus's history, Meleager is identified as the brother Tydeus killed: 'Tideus, qui ideo de patria eiectus erat quia fratrem Mel<eagrum> interfecerat' ('Tydeus, who had been exiled from his country for the reason that he had killed his brother Meleager').[491] Thus, the Irish author's exemplar of the *Thebaid* may have transmitted these details, leading him to recreate the Calydonian boar hunt to accommodate their relationship and create the scenario in which Tydeus commits fratricide. It also seems likely that the translator drew upon Statius's description of Tydeus wearing the pelt of the Calydonian boar at *Thebaid*, I.488–90 to place him at the scene of the hunt.

The third section of Lactantius's *fabula* describes the quarrel arising from Atalanta being gifted the boar hide by Meleager:

> postea Meleager in se uenientem feram excepit interemitque. et gratus aduersus puellam futurus, quae inter uiros successu uirtutis enituerat, pellem monstri illius cum capite <ei> dedit ad testimonium laudis. sed munus peractum fortitudine inuidia<m> prodidit. Plexippus namque et Agenor, Meleagri auunculi, indignati sunt sibi praelatam fuisse uirginem et eam dono spoliauerunt. qua contentione fata sibi maturauere. id indignatus Meleager consanguinitate calcata matris suae fratrem Plexippum occidit sibique matris affectum abstulit. (*ISTC*, II.1282–92)
>
> Later Meleager took the animal as it came towards him and killed it. And intending to be pleasing to the girl who had been distinguished among the men by the success of her courage, he gave her the skin of the monster along with its head as a token of his praise. But the gift given for bravery produced envy. For Plexippus and Agenor, Meleager's uncles, were angry that the girl had been preferred to them and they stripped the gift from her. By this quarrel they brought about death for themselves. Meleager, angry at this, trampling on their kinship, killed Plexippus, his mother's brother, and lost his mother's love for himself.

In contrast to the commentary and despite acknowledging Atalanta as being 'banngaisdaig' ('a lady warrior') (*TnT*, 354), the Irish narrative reduces her role from an active and important part of the hunt to Meleager's 'bannleannan' ('sweetheart') (*TnT*, 354). Consequently, Tydeus takes affront when Meleager gifts her the boar hide, asking his brother why he has given the hide to his sweetheart, rather than to him, who first wounded the wild boar (*TnT*, 356–58). Meleager responds that it was his right to give away the boar hide, 'Me da marbad ⁊ da mudugud, ⁊ is aire sin thucus di' ('It is I that killed and destroyed him, and therefore I gave it

[491] H. Anderson, *Manuscripts of Statius*, III, pp. 10–12. A late medieval commentary on the *Thebaid* titled *Scriptum super Statio Thebaydos* found in Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, MS Lat. XII. 61, fol. 2^{r} also gives Tydeus as Meleager's killer, see David Anderson, *Before the Knight's Tale: Imitation of Classical Epic in Boccaccio's Teseida* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), pp. 242–50.

her') (*TnT*, 358–59).[492] Tydeus does not accept this and fights Atalanta. Having defeated her, he takes the boar hide with him. In appropriating the function of Meleager's uncles, Plexippus and Agenor, who strip Atalanta of the hide in the commentary (*ISTC*, II.1287–89), Tydeus's role in the vernacular takes on the practical aspect of explaining how he came by the boar hide, something which is not explained by either Statius or Lactantius. As well as offering a practical solution to Tydeus being in possession of the boar hide, the Irish translator's reading of the *fabula* is distinctly patriarchal in denying Atalanta the hide as a recognition of her *virtus* ('courage') in the hunt.[493]

The final section of Lactantius's *fabula* describes the death of Meleager:

> Althaea siquidem dum saeuit ultione germanorum, [nam] titionem, quem habebat occultum - qui, cum Meleager nasceretur, in regia subito apparuerat eius sortis, ut iuuenis tamdiu uiueret, quoad is esset seruatus - [quem] mater ignibus mersit eumque cum filii fatis exstinxit. quae postquam admissum nefas agnouit, laqueo uitam finiuit. (*ISTC*, II.1292–98)
>
> Accordingly, while Althaea raged with desire to avenge her brothers, [for] that firebrand which she kept hidden - which had suddenly appeared in the palace when Meleager was born as a token of his fate, that the young man would live as long as it was kept safe - [this] did his mother drown in fire and extinguish along with the life of her son. When she realised that she had committed a sin, she ended her life by a noose.

In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, there is no hint of Lactantius's description of Meleager's death at the hands of his mother, Althaea, or her subsequent suicide. In contrast, the circumstances surrounding Meleager's death are less complex than in Lactantius's *fabula*: having heard that Tydeus has vanquished Atalanta for the boar hide, Meleager is seized with anger and sets out to avenge the deed upon his brother; consequently, Meleager is killed by Tydeus (*TnT*, 362–64). At this point in the narrative, the translator reminds the reader of his purpose in providing this tale, which was to explain why Tydeus was exiled 'conid indsin rohechtrad 7 rohindarbad e sin' ('so that for that he was exiled and banished') (*TnT*, 365). The reader is then returned to the main narrative where Tydeus proceeds to stumble across Polynices sleeping in the doorway at Argos (*TnT*, 365–71).

Thus, three elements of the vernacular tale appear to have been the translator's innovation: placing Tydeus at the hunt, having him take the boar hide from Atalanta, and the

[492] Note that narrative description of Meleager killing the boar in Lactantius has been transformed into dialogue in the Middle Irish; reflecting the externalisation of Meleager's motivation in giving the boar hide to Atalanta. See **Chapter 3:4.2** for further examples and discussion on this approach.
[493] An interesting development when one considers that Lactantius was often concerned in his commentary to demonstrate that 'weapons are not properly the provinance of the female sex', see A. M. Keith, *Engendering Rome: Women in Latin epic* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), p. 34.

death of Meleager by Tydeus. The translator may have developed the first two parts of this narrative from a combination of sources. These may have included Statius's *Thebaid*, where the poet depicts Tydeus wearing the Calydonian boar's pelt (e.g. I.488–90; II.541–43) and associates the warrior with the hunt in the boar simile at II.467–79; and Lactantius's commentary, which appears to have provided a skeleton plot to work from. The third part, that of Meleager's death, may have relied on the authority of *accessus* material transmitted in the *Thebaid*'s manuscript tradition, which assered that Tydeus killed his brother Meleager. By expanding upon the narrative in this way, the Irish author provides a thorough explanation of Tydeus's exile and Statius's allusion to him as a fratricide.

4.4.3 Perseus and the death of the Gorgon: *TnT*, 1200–07 (cf. *Thebaid*, III.462–68)

As Amphiaraus and Melampus ascend the mountain of Aphesas in the *Thebaid* Book III, Statius comments on the mountain:

> inde ferebant
> nubila suspenso celerem temerasse volatu
> Persea, cum raptos pueri perterrita mater
> prospexit de rupe gradus ac paene secuta est.
> (*Thebaid*, III.462–65)
>
> They used to say that from it swift Perseus violated the clouds as he hovered in flight, while his terrified mother saw from the crag her boy's rapt steps and almost followed.

Statius's reference to Perseus here recalls the myth that he had winged sandals which he used to locate the Gorgon, Medusa, so that he could slay her. In order to heighten the emotion of the scene, Perseus's mother, Danae, is imagined as watching her son take off in flight. The poet's somewhat abstruse description of the mountain's link with Perseus is elucidated in the Middle Irish translation, 'Et is do mullach an sleibi sin rofoluaing Peirs mac Ioip do cathugud risin Gorgain' ('And it was to the top of that mountain, that Perseus, son of Jupiter, flew to fight with the Gorgon') (*TnT*, 1198–1200). Statius's allusion to Danae is not transmitted in translation. Instead, mention of the Gorgon prompted the Irish author to explain Perseus's tale further, ensuring that the reader understood what this monster was:

> Et is amlaid robai an Gorgain sin .i. torathar trechendach, 7 cach duine adchid he, doníth carraig chomdaingean de. Et o chualaid Pers, mac Eoiph, sin, tainig d' indsaigid Meneirbi, 7 dosir furtacht furri dochum na Gorgaine. Tug Menearb[a] a sciathgloinidhi udein dó co fai[c]ead-som scath an torathair ag tachur ris trésan sciath

> sin *7 co faced in torathar a scath fen conar air fen dochuaid ann*; 7 atorchair an Gorgan leis-[s]ium amlaid sin. (*TnT*, 1200–07)
>
> And that Gorgon was thus, that is, a three-headed monster, and every person that saw it, it would make solid rock from him. And when Perseus, son of Jupiter, heard that, he went to Minerva and sought help from her to approach the Gorgon. Minerva gave him her own glassy shield, so that he might see the reflection of the monster fighting against him through that shield, *and so that the monster might see its own reflection, so that it might not advance upon himself there*; and the Gorgon fell by him in that way.

The elaboration on the Gorgon in the Middle Irish text differs from Lactantius's corresponding note which explains only,

> 461 APHESANTA mons est Tarsi Ciliciae, unde se Perseus emiserat ad uolandum, cum ad exstinguendam Gorgonam Libyen peteret. ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀφιέναι Aphesanta nomen accepit. (*ISTC*, III.871–74)
>
> 461 APHESAS, is a mountain in Tarsus, Cilicia, from which Perseus threw himself in order to fly, when he was making for Libya to destroy the Gorgon. Aphesas took its name from the Greek verb 'to throw off'.

Further information on Perseus's defeat of the Gorgon can be found in the commentary relating to *Thebaid*, I.98, which explains Statius's reference to Atlas:

> 98 PROCVL A(RDVVS) A(TLAS) procul: longe est enim nimis occasus a Thessalia, in quo Atlas est positus. Atlas, Iapeti filius et Clymenae, cum hospitio non susciperet Perseum, Iouis et Danaae filium, qui a Polydecte rege missus fuerat ad Medusam Gorgonam occidendam, quam Perseus Minerva monstrante interfecit, rediens, cum ab Atlante Libyae finibus prohiberetur, monstrato Gorgonis capite in montem eum mutauit. (*ISTC*, I.324–31)
>
> 98 FAR AWAY STEEP ATLAS far away: for it is exceedingly far off west from Thessaly, in which Atlas is positioned. Atlas, son of Iapetus and Clymene, when he did not hospitably receive Perseus, son of Jupiter and Danae, who had had been sent by King Polydecte to kill the Gorgon Medusa, which Perseus killed with Minerva's advice, returning, when he was prohibited from the boundaries of Libya by Atlas, having revealed the head of the Gorgon, he changed him into a mountain.

Yet, the vernacular tale of Perseus's slaying of the Gorgon both lacks the details available in Lactantius and shows a variant knowledge of the myth.[494]

For instance, the Middle Irish narrative does not include the information that Perseus was sent by King Polydecte to kill the Gorgon (*ISTC*, I.326–27). In contrast, the Irish Perseus

[494] Further references in Lactantius to Perseus corresponding to *Thebaid*, I.224–25; I.255; and III.633–34 do not appear to have been drawn upon by the Irish author.

is motivated by the knowledge that the Gorgon turns everyone it sees into stone, '7 cach duine adchid he, doníth carraig chomdaingean de' ('and every person that saw it, it would make solid rock from him.') (*TnT,* 1201–02) a detail which is not included in Lactantius's version of the tale. A similar line about the Gorgons is transmitted in Servius Danielis: '*quarum aspectus intuentes vertebat in lapides*' ('*their appearance turned everyone who saw them into stone*') (*Aeneid,* II.616.8–9). Also, VM II's 'De Gorgonis' ('On the Gorgons') provides, 'Has si quis uidit, stupore statim in lapidem uersus est' ('If anyone looked upon them, he was immediately turned into stone in amazement') (VM II, 135.2–3). The Irish text reflects this same concept. However, in contrast to both the commentary of Servius Danielis and the VM II, the Middle Irish tale only envisages there being one Gorgon. The rest of Servius Danielis's note on the Gorgons focuses primarily on Medusa's union with Neptune and the begetting of Pegasus (*Aeneid,* II.616.6–15) which is not what we find in the Irish narrative. Perseus's myth is also told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, IV.604–803 and Hyginus Astronomus, *Astronomica*, II.12, but I have not found any parallels between these accounts and the Middle Irish narrative.[495]

The description of the shield given to Perseus by Minerva in VM II's tale offers one further correspondence to the Irish narrative:

> Quam Perseus filius Iouis et Dane a Polidecte rege missus accepto a Minerua, ne a Gorgona posset uideri, uitreo clippeo interceptoque inprimis Phorcidum lumine, que inuicem custodiis utebantur, interfecit. (VM II, 135.15–18)
>
> Perseus, the son of Jupiter and Danae, killed her. He was sent by King Polydectes after he received from Minerva a shield of crystal, so that the Gorgon could not see him. Also, he snatched away the eye of Phorcys' daughters, which they used for watching.

The description of the shield as 'uitreo clippeo' ('a shield of crystal', or 'of glass', VM II, 135.17) brings to mind the depiction of Perseus receiving Minerva's assistance in the Middle Irish text, 'Tug Menearb[a] a sciathgloinidhi udein dó' ('Minerva gave him her own glassy shield') (*TnT,* 1203–04). Therefore, although the vernacular version of Perseus's slaying of the Gorgon cannot be traced to a direct source in the commentary or mythography tradition, there are elements of the tale which suggest that it was developed from a narrative which may have also influenced the VM II's rendering. In the absence of certain details from the mythological tradition, such as the role of King Polydectes or Perseus stealing the eye of Phorcys's daughters, it is tempting to see this example of *amplificatio* in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* as an act of creative reconstruction by the translator.

[495] See Hyginus, *De Astronomia*, ed. by Ghislaine Viré (Stutgardiae; Lipsiae: Teubner, 1992).

The description of the Gorgon as 'torathar trechendach' ('a three-headed monster') (*TnT*, 1200–01) may also indicate the reconstruction of this myth as an Irish invention. According to classical myth, the Gorgons were the three sisters Stheno, Euryale, and Medusa, but I have yet to trace a version in which any of them have three heads. In recalling the tale of the Gorgon, the Irish author may have confused the monster with three-headed Geryon, a fabled king who may been known to the medieval Irish scholar through *Togail Troí*, which relates how Hercules defeated the monster.[496] Isidore of Seville also listed the Gorgons alongside Geryon under 'hominum fabulosa portenta' ('fabulous human monstrosities') (*Etym.*, XI.28–29); although it should be noted that Isidore describes Geryon as having *triplici forma* ('three bodies') rather than three heads.

The Middle Irish rendering of Perseus's tale has no direct predecessor in the known commentary tradition. The few details that do correspond with other Latin sources suggest to me that the Irish author was familiar with this myth, but that he worked primarily from memory in providing the vernacular account.

4.5 Lactantius's commentary and the background to Harmonia's necklace

In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, exposition and translation go hand in hand. The examples in **Chapter 4:3** demonstrate that Lactantius's commentary was used to provide additional information for the translation narrative; however, as the evidence in **Chapter 4:4** demonstrates, the learned scholia incorporated into the text do not always correspond with Lactantius. This raises the question of how exclusively the Irish author relied upon Lactantius for additional information in the translation of Statius's epic. In this section, I argue that Lactantius's commentary was used very extensively and, at times, consistently, by the Middle Irish translator as an aid to interpreting Statius's epic. To explore this theory, I focus on the tale of Harmonia's necklace at *TnT*, 752–95 (cf. *Thebaid*, II.265–305). The inclusion of *Scél an Mundtuirc* in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* can be seen to highlight the interest of medieval Irish scholars in the tale of Harmonia's necklace.[497] I explore the narrative from the sections of Middle Irish *Thebaid* which precede *Scél an Mundtuirc* and argue that the text here reveals the original translator's interest in this tale, which he explicated extensively.

[496] Geryon is recorded as having four heads in *TTLL*, three in *TTH*, see Myrick, p. 124. Further evidence that the translator of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* developed imagery using *Togail Troí* appears in an *ecphrasis* at *TnT*, 2412–17, which focuses on the Amazon Marsepia and notes that Hercules took her weapons; an episode related in *TTLL*, 431–57.
[497] Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*', 67–112.

In the *Thebaid*, Statius tells the story of the necklace after the occurrence of 'omina [...] | dira' ('dire omens') (II.263–64) during the wedding of Polynices and Tydeus to Argia and Deiphyle, Adrastus's daughters. The necklace, brought by Polynices from Thebes, is worn by Argia as a wedding gift. Using the adjective *dirum* ('dire') for both the omens and the necklace, Statius directly connects the ominous events at the wedding to Argia's possession of it:

> nam tu infaustos donante marito
> ornatus, Argia, geris dirumque monile
> Harmoniae.[498] longa est series, sed nota, malorum.
> (*Thebaid*, II.265–67)
>
> For you wear the unlucky ornament that your husband gave you, Argia, the dire necklace of Harmonia. Long is the sequence of woes but well known.

Vessey describes how Statius used the necklace for symbolic purposes, arguing that 'it represents the hereditary evil of the Theban dynasty, now established in Argos, in the family of Adrastus'.[499] The destructive nature of the necklace appears to have been something of a fascination for the Irish author. The first indication that elements of Lactantius's commentary may have been incorporated into the Irish vernacular translation of *Thebaid*, II.265–305 appear in the exposition of Statius's lines from Book II.265–67. The Middle Irish *Thebaid* makes the identity of Argia explicit and provides further information about the necklace:

> 7 robai airrdi urbada aili andsin, uair is amlaid robai ingen Argía .i. banchele Polinices, mic Eidip, 7 cumtach alaind orda ima bragait .i. muntorc alaind iṅgantach Hermione. Ua feochair firchruthach in frithi sin, ua haindsech 7 ua hurbadach inn aiscid sin do cech oen ac a m[b]id. (*TnT*, 752–57)
>
> And there were other baleful signs there, for thus was the maiden Argia, that is, wife of Polynices, son of Oedipus, a splendid golden ornament about her neck, that is, Harmonia's splendid wonderful necklace. It was wild [and] perfectly formed that treasure trove, that gift was combative and destructive to each one who had it.

Sections of this passage correspond with Lactantius's note on *Thebaid*, II.265–67, which explains:

[498] Shackleton Bailey translates 'For Argia wears the unlucky ornament that her husband gave her', which I change to show Statius's apostrophy to Argia.
[499] Vessey, pp. 138–39. See also Ganiban, pp. 60–61, n. 65; and Dennis Feeney, *The Gods in Epic. Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 363–64.

> 265–267 (NEC MIRVM NAM TVM INFAVSTOS DONANTE MARITO/ ORNATUS ARGIA GERIS (DIRVMQUE MONILE / HARMONIAE) dicit non esse mirandum quod aduersum omen acciderit, siquidem Argia, uxor Polynicis, funestum monile acceperit, quod Thebis ueniens ad Argos extulerat. et repetit originem huius muneris, quod a Vulcano Veneri fabricatum fuisse dicatur et deinde Harmoniae <fuerit>, postremo reginarum omnium quae Thebis uixerunt, quas istius monilis omine dicit infeliciter deperisse. (*ISTC*, II.691–99)
>
> 265–267 AND NO WONDER. FOR ARGIA WEARS THAT UNLUCKY ORNAMENT THAT HER HUSBAND GAVE, THE DIRE NECKLACE OF HARMONIA He says that it is no wonder that a bad omen occurred, since Argia, wife of Polynices, received the deadly necklace, which he [Polynices] had brought coming from Thebes to Argos. And he [Statius] seeks the origin of this gift, which is said to have been made by Vulcan for Venus and then it was Harmonia's, the first [lit. furthest back] of all the queens who lived at Thebes, whom he says unfortunately perished by token of that necklace.

The Irish author appears to have provided the identification of Argia as Polynices' wife from the commentary above and added a patronymic for Polynices as well. Statius's assertion that the *series malorum* ('sequence of woes') relating to the necklace is well known was not translated in the vernacular narrative. Rather, the Middle Irish description, 'ua haindsech 7 ua hurbadach inn aiscid sin do cech oen ac a m[b]id' ('that gift was combative and destructive to each one who had it') (*TnT*, 756–57) is reminiscent of Lactantius's observation that Harmonia was the first of the queens who lived at Thebes, 'quas istius monilis omine dicit infeliciter deperisse' ('whom he says unfortunately perished by token of that necklace') (*ISTC*, II.698–99).

In the *Thebaid*, Statius goes on to narrate the origins of the necklace, describing how Vulcan made it as a cursed gift to give to Venus and Mars's daughter Harmonia (II.269–91). The translator of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* reworked this section of the epic considerably: first, by choosing not to include Statius's descriptions of the Cyclopes and Telchines who worked on the necklace (II.273–75); and, second, by reimagining how the necklace was made (II.275–88); and providing an exposition on the fate of both Harmonia and Semele (II.288–93). A comparison between *Thebaid*, II.269–73 and *TnT*, 757–63, reveals that the translation technique used here is that of *enarratio*:

Lemnius hoc, ut prisca fides, Mavortia longum | furta dolens, capto postquam nil obstat amori | poena nec ultrices castigavere catenae, | Harmoniae dotale decus sub luce iugali | struxerat. (*Thebaid*, II.269–73)	Uair is e Ulchan uruadach, gaba imneadach ifrin, roairic in gnim sin, 7 is di dorigni Ulcan in cumdach n-orda sin .i. d' Ermione, d' ingin Mairt, mic Ioib, da dei[500] in chatha, 7 Uenerech bandei na toili, 7 is ime tuc-sum

[500] Calder left out the reference to two gods here in his English translation. I include it as although it is obscure, and although I can find no other reference to Jupiter as 'god of war', it is what is in the text.

	sin disi dar ulcaib ria. Uair ua hi caemchele Ulcan Uenir uanchumachtach, 7 is tar cend Ulchain doroigne Mairt inn ingin Ermione re Uenir. (*TnT*, 757–63)
The Lemnian, so goes the old belief, long resenting Mars' stolen pleasures, when punishment failed to hinder their detected love and avenging chains did not castigate (them), had wrought this for Harmonia, a dotal adornment for her wedding day.	For it is destructive Vulcan, the baleful smith of hell, who devised that piece of work, and it was for her Vulcan made that golden ornament, that is, for Harmonia, for the daughter of Mars, son of Jupiter, the two gods of war, and of Venus, the goddess of love; and it was because of this he gave that to her in order to cause her ills. For Venus, the mighty one, was Vulcan's lovely spouse; and it is against Vulcan, Mars begot that daughter Harmonia by Venus.

Statius's reference to 'Lemnius' ('the Lemnian') (*Thebaid*, II.269) is explained in the Middle Irish narrative as 'Ulchan uruadach, gaba imneadach ifrin' ('Vulcan, the baleful smith of hell') (*TnT*, 757–58). The identification of Harmonia is also expanded upon, noting that Vulcan made the ornament for her and providing her parentage (*TnT*, 759–60). Lactantius's commentary on *Thebaid*, II.272 may have aided the translator in interpreting these lines from the *Thebaid* and assisted the production of an expositional narrative in the vernacular:

> 272 HARMONIAE DOTALE DECVS ut illa puniretur, quae ex adulterio Martis et Veneris nata esset. huiusmodi enim uenenis infecerat illud monile Vulcanus, ut necesse esset hoc monile gestanti aerumnarum mole opprimi. hoc enim usa est Harmonia, Agaue, Semele, Iocasta, Argia, ultimo Eriphyla, nam ad Polynicen hoc hereditario iure peruenerat. quaecumque ergo hoc ornatu usae sunt, graui exitu et aerumnis affectae sunt. (*ISTC*, II.700–07)
>
> 272 FOR HARMONIA, A DOTAL ADORNAMENT in order that she was punished, because she had been born from the adultery of Mars and Venus. Vulcan poisoned that necklace with this sort of venom, so that it was inevitable for whoever wore that necklace to be overwhelmed by a mass of troubles. For that [necklace] had been worn by Harmonia, Agaue, Semele, Iocasta, Argia, [and] finally Eriphyle, for it reached Polynices by right of inheritance. Therefore, whoever wore this adornment, they were afflicted by grievous death and troubles.

Between this comment and the one given for *Thebaid*, II.265–67, the translator would have been able to ascertain that the maker of the necklace was Vulcan and that Harmonia was the daughter of Mars and Venus. The Middle Irish narrative asserts that Vulcan's intention in giving this gift to Harmonia was to cause her troubles (*TnT*, 760–61). This concept echoes Lactantius's explanation of Vulcan's purpose in poisoning the necklace: 'ut necesse esset hoc monile gestanti aerumnarum mole opprimi' ('so that it was inevitable for whoever wore that necklace to be overwhelmed by a mass of troubles') (*ISTC*, II.702–03). Thus, the Middle Irish

Thebaid expands on Statius' narrative, where Vulcan's motivations are never quite so explicit. The observation that Harmonia was born from the adultery of Mars and Venus in the vernacular narrative may also have been derived from the commentary.

These passages in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* were not simply formed from a fusion of Statius and Lactantius's texts alone. The translator can be seen to have added in other useful amplifications to inform the medieval Irish reader. For instance, the positions which the deities hold, such as *gaba* ('smith') for Vulcan, and *bandei na toili* ('goddess of love') for Venus, are provided in the Middle Irish narrative. This type of elucidation appears consistently throughout the Irish *Thebaid* and, as I argue in **Chapter 5:3.4**, it appears to be a standard element of the translator's style.

Another indication in this section of the Middle Irish narrative that Lactantius's commentary was consulted by the translator is found in the description of Harmonia's metamorphosis into a serpent (*TnT*, 769–74). Statius's depiction of the effects of the necklace is highly allusive:

> prima fides operi, Cadmum comitata iacentem
> Harmonia versis in sibila dira querelis
> Illyricos longo sulcavit pectore campos.
> (*Thebaid*, II.289–91)
>
> The work first proved itself when Harmonia's plaints turned to dire hisses and in company with prostrate Cadmus she furrowed Illyria's plains with her trailing breast.

The poet did not elucidate on Harmonia's transformation, no doubt expecting his Roman readers to know the tale of Harmonia and Cadmus's metamorphosis into snakes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, IV.563–603. In contrast, the Middle Irish *Thebaid* makes it explicit that Harmonia was turned into a snake:

> A[r] rasoed in bean sin i nnathraig ngranda ngeranaig aroen re Cathim, mac Agenoir, co mbitis aroen ac sirfhetgaire isna moigib cuan[d]a caithmecda. (*TnT*, 771–74)
>
> For that woman was changed into an ugly complaining serpent together with Cadmus, son of Agenor, so that they were together everlastingly hissing in the fine sumptuous plains.

In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, Statius's description of Harmonia's *querellae* ('plaints') turned to *sibila dira* ('dire hisses') appears to have become part of an an *enarratio*, providing the exposition that she was changed into 'i nnathraig ngranda ngeranaig' ('an ugly complaining serpent') (*TnT*, 772) along with Cadmus. The Irish description of these two hissing together

on the *mag* (‘plain’, *TnT*, 773) seems to recall Statius’s ‘Illyricos campos’ (‘Illyria’s plains’) (*Thebaid*, II.291). The translator chose not to retain the reference to Illyria, perhaps because he was unable to identify the toponym here; instead he replaced it with the alliterating adjectives *cúanna* (‘fine’) and *caithmech* (‘sumptuous’).

Again, the vernacular seems to incorporate elements of Lactantius’s note on Statius’s text:

> 289–291 PRIMA FIDES OPERI (CADMVM COMITATA IACENTEM / HARMONIA VERSIS IN SIBILA DIRA QVERELIS / ILLYRICOS LONGO SVLCAVIT PECTORE CAMPOS) periculum huius monilis fidem fecit Harmoniae, quae prima experta est. nam in anguem uersa est cum marito ob hanc causam, quod <Cadmus>, Agenoris et Ar<g>iopae filius, draconem Martis, qui fontem custodiebat, occidit. ideo uult hoc contigisse, quia nuptialibus donis hoc monile possederat. (*ISTC*, II.786–93)
>
> 289–291 THE WORK FIRST PROVED ITSELF WHEN HARMONIA’S PLAINTS TURNED TO DIRE HISSES AND IN COMPANY WITH PROSTRATE CADMUS SHE FURROWED ILLYRIA’S PLAINS WITH HER TRAILING BREAST. The danger of this necklace proved its authenticity on Harmonia, who was the first to put it to the test. For she was turned into a serpent with her husband for this reason, because <Cadmus>, the son of Agenor and Ar<g>iopa, killed the serpent of Mars, who was guarding his spring. For that reason, he wishes this to come about, because she had acquired this necklace with her wedding gifts.

The detail in the Irish text that Harmonia was turned into a *nathair* (‘snake’) may well have been clarified by Lactantius’s commentary, which explains that she was turned into an *anguis* (‘a snake’).[501] The addition of a patronymic for Cadmus at this point in the Irish narrative, also suggests a close correspondence to the commentary.

The Irish translator appears to have used Lactantius’s commentary almost continuously in these passages to aid his interpretation of Statius’s verses. The most extensive example of this approach to translation in the section of text under discussion is the inclusion of Semele’s tale. In the *Thebaid*, Semele’s unfortunate tale is first brought to the reader’s attention in the proem at the beginning of Book I, where Statius alludes to ‘quod saevae Iunonis opus’ (‘what savage Juno wrought’) (I.12), a reference to Juno’s cruel treatment of Semele. In the corresponding text in Lactantius, a narrative *fabula* is provided to explain the reference (I.45–57). Semele’s sad story is next mentioned again in Book II of the *Thebaid*, where Statius alludes to her fate in the context of the history of Harmonia’s necklace, ‘improba mox Semele vix dona nocentia collo | induit, et fallax intravit limina Iuno’ (‘Then Semele overbold scarce

[501] The fate of Cadmus and his wife is also given in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*’s prologue at *TnT*, 78–79, see **Chapter 3:3.3**.

set the baneful gift upon her neck when false Juno crossed the threshold') (II.292–93). In the corresponding passage at *TnT*, 774–86 the translation is expanded using material from the *fabula* on Semele at *ISTC*, I.45–57, rather than the parallel commentary at *ISTC*, II.794–801.

12 QVOD SAEVAE I(VNONIS) O(PVS) Iuno dum uideret a Ioue Semelen diligi, in aniculam uersa est [Iuno] †decoratam†. dolum meditans Semeles limen ingressa est, cui ita locuta est: si te, ut perhibent, integre amat Iuppiter, hoc ab eo impetra, ut talis ad te ueniat, qualis Iunoni solet uideri. quae ita inducta Iouem rogauit. qui cum negaret et diceret aspectum dei nullo modo ferre posse mortalem, tandem promisit tali se habitu ad eam esse uenturum, quali ad Iunonem consueuit. qui cum uenisset cum fulmine, Semele sustinere non potuit et obiit. Iuppiter uero aperto eius uelocissime utero Liberum patrem [aperto] femore abdidisse dicitur, ut expletis nouem mensibus legitime nasceretur. (*ISTC*, I.45–57)	Et asa haithli sin rosiacht in muntorc sin co Semile, ingin Cathim, mic Agenoir, 7 is di-side tuc Ioib in grad ndermar. Et ni luaithi ranic in muntorc sin da hindsaigid na thanic Iunaind, ingean Shatuirn .i. bean Ioib, d' indsaigid na hingine i rricht a mumi, 7 is ed adrubairt[502] re Semila: 'Cundig-siu,' ar si, 'comairle 7 comriachtain rit isin de[i]lb i comraiceand re hIunaind.' Et rochuindig Samilia amlaid sin ar Ioib comriachtain ria, 7 rocomroic Ioib ria-si a richt saignen telctech tendtide, amal danid re hIunaind cu raloiscead fochetoir Semile, uair nir-fhaelaster-si del[l]rud na diadachta doben ria. Et is tre bithin in muntoirc sin rolot loscend in n-ingen sin, amar fhorglit na faibli guacha gendtligi sin. (*TnT*, 774–86)
12 WHAT SAVAGE JUNO WROUGHT When Juno saw that Semele was dear to Jupiter, she changed into a charming little old lady. Plotting deceit, she entered Semele's house, to whom she spoke as follows: 'If Jupiter truly loves you, as people say, request this from him: that he come to you in such a way as he is accustomed to appear to Juno.' So having been encouraged she asked Jupiter. Although he refused and said that in no way could a mortal bear the sight of a god, eventually he did promise that he would come to her in such a guise as he was accustomed [to come] to Juno. When he had come with [his] thunderbolt, Semele was not able to withstand it and she died. Indeed, having most swiftly opened her womb, Jupiter is said to have concealed father Liber in his [opened] thigh, so that he was legitimately born after the full nine months.	And afterwards that necklace reached Semele, daughter of Cadmus, son of Agenor; and it is to her Jupiter gave very great love. And no sooner had that necklace reached her than Juno, daughter of Saturn, that is, Jupiter's wife, came to the maiden in the guise of her nurse, and this is what she said to Semele: 'You ask [Jupiter],' she said, 'for council and a meeting with you in the form in which he meets with Juno.' And Semele asked Jupiter to meet with her in this way, and Jupiter had intercourse with her in the guise of hurtling fiery lightning, as he did with Juno, so that Semele was at once burnt, for she could not endure the shining of the divinity that struck her. And it was because of that necklace that a toad wounded that maiden, as those lying heathen fables testify.

As well as the version above, the basic narrative from the Middle Irish account follows a fairly typical version of the myth, which is found in Hyginus's *Fabulae*, 167 or 179, and VM I,

[502] Calder's edition provides *adubairt*; however, it is *adrubairt* at Adv.MS.72.1.8, fol. 5^{v} b18.

118.[503] The story goes that Juno approached Semele in the guise of her nurse and counselled Semele to ask Jupiter to visit her in the form he visits Juno; Semele followed Juno's advice and asks Jupiter to visit her in this way; Jupiter appeared to Semele as lighting and she burned to death. Although this narrative could have been developed from several sources, it is the description of Semele's death that provides evidence that the Middle Irish narrative follows Lactantius's version.[504]

Here, the translator explains that Semele is instantly burnt by Jupiter's appearance, 'uair nir-fhaelaster-si del[l]rud na diadachta doben ria' ('for she could not endure the shining of the divinity that struck her') (*TnT*, 783–84). This corresponds with the commentary text, 'Semele sustinere non potuit et obiit' ('Semele was not able to withstand it and she died') (*ISTC*, I.54). Lactantius's *sustinere* ('to sustain') is translated *nir-fhælastar* ('could not endure') in the Irish narrative. In contrast, Hyginus describes Semele as 'fulmine est icta' ('struck by a thunderbolt') in *Fabulae*, 167.8, and 'conflagrauit' ('consumed by fire') in *Fabulae*, 179.11. In the VM I's account, Semele and her house are 'flamma adurit' ('consumed by fire') (VM I, 118.16).

The account of Semele's death related in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* appears to have been the cause of some confusion for at least one medieval Irish scholar. The assertion that Semele was wounded by a toad at *TnT*, 784–85 is not found in any other version of the myth. Given that Semele is said to have been burnt ('raloiscead') in the previous line it seems likely that the inclusion of the toad into the story came about through a corruption in the text. Gwyn suggests we should read instead, 'roloisc lochet in n-ingin-sin' ('lightning burnt up the girl').[505] Another possibility would be to read *loscend* ('the toad') as a corruption of *eDIL* s.v. 1 *loscud* which would provide us with 'rolot loscud' ('she was wounded by burning').

Either interpretation would explain why there is no toad in the account of Semele's death at *TnT*, 774–84, or in the later retelling of Semele's tale at *TnT*, 1719–25. If we accept that the story of Semele being wounded by a toad developed from a corruption in the text, then the explanation that this information comes from 'na faibli guacha gendtligi sin' ('those lying heathen fables') (*TnT*, 785–86), may demonstrate a medieval Irish scholar responding to an incongruity in the tale and ensuring that the reader is aware of it.[506] Alternatively, this note

[503] Smith provides a useful discussion on the development of direct speech in Lactantius's version of the *fabula*, 'Mythological Material', pp. 181–82.
[504] While the details of Liber's birth from *ISTC*, I.54–57 are not included in the Irish version of the narrative here, a translation of these lines can be found at *TnT*, 1719–25.
[505] Gwyn, p. 437.
[506] An interesting contrast can be found in some versions of *Togail Troí* where an aspect of the history of the children of Adam and Noah includes is described as *senchas gentlide* ('pagan knowledge'), see Michael Clarke, 'Reconstructing the medieval Irish bookshelf: a case study of *Fingal Rónáin* and the horse–eared kings', in *Classical Literature and Learning*, ed. by O'Connor, pp. 123–39 (p. 126).

may have come from the original translator, who perhaps viewed this racy *fabula* of Semele being burnt to death by divine Jupiter during sexual intercourse as lacking veracity.[507]

Despite the Irish author's apparent dislike for Semele's tale, it does still appear in the text and as the version of the tale appears to rely upon Lactantius's *fabula*, how do we account for its appearance in the translation text? Although Statius's proem was not included in the Middle Irish translation of the *Thebaid*, the use of Lactantius's note relating to *Thebaid*, I.12, seems to indicate that the Irish author's exemplar of the *Thebaid* did transmit both Statius's proem and the supporting commentary from Lactantius. Alternatively, Lactantius's *fabula* on Semele may have been available as part of a freestanding version of the commentary. Either possibility would have enabled the translator the opportunity to access the additional information on Semele to expand his narrative. By including Lactantius's *fabula* on Semele, the translator ensured that the reader knew her fate within the context of Harmonia's necklace and the Theban household.

After the tale of Semele in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, the translator followed it with Statius's depiction of the necklace being received by Jocasta before it is passed to Argia through marriage (*TnT*, 786–92; cf. *Thebaid*, II.294–96). It is through Argia's wearing of the necklace that Amphiaraus's wife, Eriphyle, becomes envious of it and desires it for herself:

> viderat hoc coniunx perituri vatis, et aras
> ante omnes epulasque trucem secreta coquebat
> invidiam, saevis detur si quando potiri
> cultibus, heu nihil auguriis adiuta propinquis.
> (*Thebaid*, II.299–302)
>
> The wife of the doomed prophet saw it and at all the altars and banquets secretly nursed a fierce envy; if only she might some day possess herself of the cruel bauble! Alas, the auguries so close at hand availed her nothing.

Statius does not give Eriphyle's name during this passage, yet in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* she is clearly identified:

> Et o'tchondairc, immorro, Erifile, caemchele Amfíarus, inni sin, tucasdáir saint sirchuindcheda air, co nar-bh[fh]earrdi le a bethu 'na iṅgnais. (*TnT*, 792–94)

[507] The intervention is also reminiscent of the concern demonstrated about the credence of *historia* ('history') and *fabula* ('fiction') in the Latin colophon at the end of *TBC–LL*, 4921–25. Medieval approaches to *fabula* and the *TBC–LL* colophon are discussed by Miles, *Heroic Saga*, pp. 1–6; Poppe, 'Medieval Irish literary theory and criticism', pp. 302–03; Johnston, pp. 131–32; Pádraig Ó Néill, 'The Latin colophon of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* in the Book of Leinster: a critical view of Old Irish Literature', *Celtica*, 23 (1999), 269–75.

> And moreover when Eriphyle, Amphiaraus' fair spouse, had seen that thing, an ever craving desire for it seized her, so that she preferred not her life apart from it.

Not only is Eriphyle named, but her husband, the *perituri vatis* ('doomed prophet') from *Thebaid*, II.299 is identified as Amphiaraus. Once again, the additional details correspond with Lactantius:

> 299 VIDERAT HOC CONIVNX (PERITVRI VATIS) Eriphylen dicit, Amphiarai uatis uxorem. (*ISTC*, II.809–10)
>
> 299 THE WIFE OF THE DOOMED PROPHET SAW IT He says Eriphyle, the wife of the prophet Amphiaraus.

By combining Statius's lines with commentary, the Irish author formed his translation as an exposition of the epic; thus, he was constantly providing the information the poet chose not to include.

The examples above demonstrate the extensive use of Lactantius's commentary in the translation of *Thebaid*, II.265–305 into Middle Irish. Lactantius was used frequently to contextualise characters so that the medieval Irish reader understood who was being talked about. For instance, in the case of Argia, Harmonia, and Eriphyle, Lactantius provided additional information about their familial relationships. In addition, the *fabula* relating Semele's unfortunate death was used as an example of the baleful qualities of Harmonia's necklace and to elaborate on Statius's brief reference to her boldness.

The foremost translation technique used in the narrative is *enarratio*, the practice of interpretation. In producing a translation through *enarratio*, the author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* appears to have developed an exegetical text which follows the principles of 'primary translation' highlighted by Copeland.[508]

4.6 Conclusion

There can be little doubt that the medieval author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* had access to Lactantius's commentary either in his exemplar or in a freestanding commentary. The examples from **Chapter 4:3** show how material from the commentary was used to clarify and expand upon Statius's often obscure verses as the vernacular prose translation was developed. Statius's text and Lactantius's commentary were not translated as separate texts by the Irish author; rather, Lactantius's notes appear to have assisted in the production of an informed

[508] Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation*, p. 107.

vernacular interpretation of the epic. The translator was selective in incorporating Lactantius's notes into the prose narrative, apparently choosing not to include the exegete's extensive references to other authors. The inclusion of additional material from Lactantius's commentary into the Middle Irish *Thebaid* appears to have been used primarily to develop the reader's understanding of the narrative. For instance, in the example of Dryas's death, the supplementary information is necessary to explain how Dryas's mysterious death came about to the reader.

In **Chapter 4:4**, I demonstrated that the Irish author was not restricted to Lactantius's commentary in expanding upon Statius's narrative. There is evidence that other sources, including Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Hyginus's *Fabulae*, may also have influenced the development of the vernacular prose. In the passages examined, the Irish author can also be seen to have incorporated elements of his own invention into the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, particularly in the case of Tydeus's involvement in the Calydonian boar hunt. In this inventive response, the translator can be seen to have turned exegete himself, providing new readings of previous accounts.

Overall, I believe the translator's use of Lactantius in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* was extensive. In the development of the passages relating to Harmonia's necklace from Statius's epic, the Irish author frequently used information available from the commentary to explain and interpret the poet's allusive descriptions of the necklace's history. In fusing together Statius's *Thebaid* and Lactantius's commentary, the Middle Irish *Thebaid* appears to be an excellent example of *enarratio*; demonstrating that the translator's primary concern was to ensure that Statius's epic could be understood by the medieval Irish reader through this retelling.

Chapter Five

Translation styles: macro and micro responses to aspects of Statian style

5.1 Introduction

O'Connor observes of Irish adaptations of classical literature:

> As elsewhere in medieval Europe, the process of adaptation was not like modern translation: verbal fidelity to the original was not the chief priority, and authors were free to abridge, expand, insert completely new episodes or passages, and generally recompose as they saw fit, whenever such an intervention helped them to communicate the content more effectively to their target audience and to achieve the desired rhetorical effect.[509]

Essentially, medieval translation and adaptation focused primarily on the transmission of content, or *materia* ('subject matter'). Copeland notes how closely associated the role of the author was with that of exegete in rendering *materia* into a new form through translation.[510] Drawing on the works of the medieval poeticians, Mathew of Vendôme and Geoffrey of Vinsauf, Copeland observes that 'To amplify or abbreviate the source, to avoid delaying where others delay, are the techniques that underscore the mastery of exegetical procedure by disguising that procedure as a form of invention.'[511] These techniques of amplification and abbreviation in rendering *materia* intelligible to the contemporary medieval reader can be found in the adaptation of classical literature in medieval Ireland. Miles highlights the ways in which medieval Irish authors employed strategies of *imitatio* and *amplificatio* in adapting pseudo-Dares' *De Excidio Troiae Historia* for their contemporary audience in *Togail Troí*.[512] Miles explores the Irish author's use of classical epic, such as Virgil's *Aeneid* and its Irish counterpart, *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, in employing these strategies.[513] Subsequently, Poppe also examines the use of similar techniques in the development of *Imtheachta Aeniasa*.[514] Poppe further explores the Irish author's use of the epic styles *imitatio*, *amplificatio*, and *aemulatio*

[509] O'Connor, 'Irish narrative literature', p. 17.
[510] Copeland, *Rhetoric Hermeneutics and Translation*, pp. 170–78.
[511] Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation*, p. 174.
[512] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, pp. 102–40.
[513] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, pp. 110–22, 143–44.
[514] Erich Poppe, '*Imtheachta Aeniasa* and its place in Medieval Textual History', in *Classical Literature and*, ed. by O'Connor, pp. 25–39.

in relation to the development of *In Cath Catharda*, the vernacular adaptation of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.[515]

Some research has also been done on approaches to abbreviation in the adaptation of classical literature in medieval Ireland. Poppe highlights the effect of this technique in his examination of 'the redactor's treatment of Virgil's similes and his subjectivity' in adapting *Aeneid*, Book VIII into Irish.[516] He demonstrates how two passages from *Aeneid*, VIII.26–35 and VIII.86–99 (cf. *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, 1797–99 and 1829–30) 'which have much reduced parallels in the Irish text, exemplify on a very small scale the differences between the subjectivity of Virgil and the greater objectivity, or detachment of the Irish author'.[517] In examining the removal of Statius's subjective invocations to the Muses I also demonstrate the development of a primarily objective style in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and highlighted the variety of narrative approaches with which the Irish author could respond to the Latin text.[518] Harris also observes the use of abbreviation in the translation narrative and argues that the episodes omitted are indicative of the medieval redactor's literary tastes and the relevance of the subject matter for his contemporary audience.[519]

In this chapter, I explore further the development of an objective translation strategy in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and investigate the Irish author's responses to Statius's epic on both a macro and micro level. On a macro level, what type of *materia*, other than Statius's invocations to the Muses, was consistently omitted or abbreviated in the Middle Irish text? What might these omissions and abbreviations reveal about the Irish author's priorities in rendering the translation? On a micro level, what interpretative concerns can we see from the translation of Statius's text into Irish? What does the Irish author's approach to naming strategies reveal about his response to the *Thebaid*? In this section, the treatment of the poet's Greek patronymics, forenames, geographical epithets, names of deities, and the identification of Thebans and Greeks in the Irish narrative is explored.

[515] Poppe, 'The Epic Styles of *In Cath Catharda*', pp. 1–20.
[516] Erich Poppe, '*Imtheachta Aeniasa*: Virgil's *Aeneid* in Medieval Ireland', *Classics Ireland*, 11 (2004), 74–94 (p. 77).
[517] Poppe, '*Imtheachta Aeniasa*', pp. 84–87.
[518] Briggs, 'Removing the Muses', forthcoming.
[519] Harris, pp. 162–70. Harris's discussion should be considered with caution, however. His interest in demonstrating the influence of an oral tradition of storytelling on the Middle Irish text often overlooks the context of the evidence.

5.2 Macro omissions and abbreviations

A wide range of material was consistently written out or abbreviated from the Middle Irish translation of Statius's *Thebaid*, an approach which often alters the way in which the Theban narrative is understood by the reader. Statius's subjective apostrophes to characters were omitted or summarised in the translation text.[520] Where the poet's apostrophes were reworked into the translation, they appear as detached and objective descriptive passages. Most direct speeches (*oratio recta*) made by characters were abbreviated. Speeches in the *Thebaid* have an average length of 13.4 lines per speech, while in the Middle Irish translation this drops just below 6 lines per speech.[521] 25 direct speeches were paraphrased through indirect speech (*oratio obliqua*); 23 were reworked into descriptive narrative; and 18 speeches were omitted altogether from the Middle Irish *Thebaid*.[522] In this section I will explore the Irish author's approaches to omitting or abbreviating these elements of Statius's *Thebaid*.

5.2.1 Apostrophes

Modern scholars have long observed Statius's extensive use of the narratorial apostrophe, where the poet addresses either a character or his reader, to express his own view of the Theban narrative.[523] Sophia Georgacopoulou has found 116 instances of the narratorial apostrophe in the *Thebaid*.[524] Statius's use of the narratorial apostrophe was one of the ways in which he guided the reader's response to the *Thebaid* and Georgacopoulou's study demonstrates how 'La voix du narrateur se glisse constamment entre les interstices du récit épique et elle le rend, dès lors, moins linéaire et moins objective.' ('The voice of the narrator constantly slips between the interstices of the epic narrative and makes it, therefore, less linear and less

[520] For example, *Thebaid*, I.155–64; II.371–74; V.534–44; VI.513–17; VII.683–87; VII.695–98; XI.574–79.
[521] William J. Dominik, *Speech and Rhetoric in Statius' Thebaid* (Hildesheim: Olms-Weidmann, 1994), pp. 6–7.
[522] See **Appendix I** for a full list of characters' speeches rendered into the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. Most of the speeches which were left out were short ones. Thiodamas's speech to Tellus at *Thebaid*, VIII.303–38 and Creon's mourning over Menoeceus at *Thebaid*, XII.72–92 and 94–102 are the longest speeches which appear to have been purposely omitted from the Middle Irish text. I have not included the loss of direct speeches by characters where they correspond with lacunas in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* manuscript tradition (see **Chapter 2:2.2**), as it is not possible to make an informed assessment of these lost elements of the text.
[523] See Sophia Georgacopoulou, *Aux frontières du récit épique: l'emploi de l'apostrophe du narrateur dans la Thébaïde de Stace* (Brussels: Éditions Latomus, 2005); Dominik, *Speech and Rhetoric*, p. 255; Johannes J. L. Smolenaars, ed. with commentary, *Statius. Thebaid VII* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), p. 14; Gordon Williams, *Change and Decline: Roman Literature in the Early Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 234–36.
[524] Georgacopoulou, p. 14.

objective.').[525] In comparison, the medieval Irish author demonstrates a concern to make his prose narrative more linear and more objective than the original epic.

The instigation of Eteocles and Polynices' feud at *Thebaid*, I.123–37 is followed by the decision to rule by alternate years (I.137–43). The reaction of the Theban people to this form of rule (I.168–70) is delayed in the *Thebaid* by what Philip Hardie describes as a moralizing outburst from the poet at I.142–64.[526] Hardie observes that 'Statius dwells on the insignificant stakes in this primitive civil war, nothing more than the poor city of Thebes'.[527] In **Chapter 3:3.1**, I demonstrated that *Thebaid*, I.144–55 was omitted from the Irish text, enabling the translator to develop a more favourable image of the city using conventional descriptive techniques from the Irish vernacular. The rest of Statius's outburst, which takes the form of two apostrophes directed at the brothers, was also left out. In the first apostrophe, the poet shies away from speculating what would happen if they were fighting over greater stakes:

> quo tenditis iras,
> a, miseri? quid si peteretur crimine tanto
> limes uterque poli, quem Sol emissus Eoo
> cardine, quem porta vergens prospectat Hibera,
> quasque procul terras obliquo sidere tangit
> avius aut Borea gelidas madidive tepentes
> igne Noti? quid si Phrygiae Tyriaeque sub unum
> convectentur opes? loca dira arcesque nefandae
> suffecere odio, furiisque immanibus emptum
> Oedipodae sedisse loco. (*Thebaid*, I.155–64)
>
> Alas you wretches, to what end do you stretch your wrath? What if by such crime you sought both of heaven's boundaries, that to which the Sun looks when he is sent forth from the eastern hinge and that to which he gazes as he sinks from his Iberian gate, and those lands he touches from afar with slanting ray, lands the North Wind chills or the moist South warms with his heat? What if the riches of Phrygia and Tyre be brought together in one? A place of terror, a citadel accursed, sufficed your hate, monstrous madness did it cost to sit where Oedipus had sat.

Vessey observes of this passage that, 'Eteocles and Polynices are interested only in *nuda potestas* (150–51), the prize they seek is to place themselves in the throne of Oedipus, to rule over a realm damned by the gods.'[528] The poet's disapproval is obvious: Eteocles and Polynices are driven only by hate (*odium*, I.163) and madness (*furiae*, I.163). The apostrophe

[525] Georgacopoulou, p. 243.
[526] Philip Hardie, *The Epic Successors of Virgil: a study in the dynamics of a tradition* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), p. 95.
[527] Hardie, p. 95.
[528] Vessey, p. 78.

recalls the opening lines of the *Thebaid*, reminding the reader that the war at 'guilty Thebes' is fought in *profanum odium* ('unnatural hate', I.1–2).

The brothers draw lots to establish who will rule first (*Thebaid*, I.164–65). After Polynices loses sovereignty, Statius directs an apostrophe at Eteocles:

> quis tunc tibi, saeve,
> quis fuit ille dies, vacua cum solus in aula
> respiceres ius omne tuum cunctosque minores,
> et nusquam par stare caput! (*Thebaid*, I.165–68)
>
> What a day that was for you, cruel monarch, when alone in empty palace you saw authority all yours, every man your inferior, nowhere a head standing as high!

Eteocles has quickly become a tyrannical monarch in the eyes of the poet, who describes the king as *saevus* ('cruel'). By omitting these apostrophes, the Irish author moved directly from the simile of the two bulls refusing to work together at the ploughshare at *Thebaid*, I.130–36 to explaining how the division of the kingdom came about. It seems likely that his intention in doing so was to develop a more linear narrative.

In comparison to the *Thebaid* the Middle Irish description of the division of the kingdom plays out very differently. The brothers are not solely responsible for the decision to rule by alternate year. In fact, the plan to manage the brothers' hostilities over the sovereignty in this way is decided by the Theban people:

> Imthusa immorro na Tiabanda, nir-faelsatar imchosnum na da mac sin immon flaithius, 7 is i comairli rochindset andsin, rigi gach re mbliadna do gach mac dib, 7 cert crandchair do denum eturru, cia dib daroised in rigi ar tus, 7 dorignead amlaid sin. Et rosiacht do Ethiocles in rigi a cirt chrandchair ri head na bliadna sin, 7 Polenices ar echtra 7 ar indarba ri sin. (*TnT*, 215–21)
>
> Now concerning the Thebans, they could not endure the contention of those two sons about the sovereignty, and this is the plan they then decided on, that the kingship should go to each of the sons every alternate year, and a decision by lot should be made between them, [as to] which of the two would come to the kingship first, and so it was done. And from the decision by lot the kingship fell to Eteocles for the length of that year, and Polynices [would be] on a journey and in exile for that [time].

It is striking that the translator should have chosen to develop the narrative in this way, as this alteration removed sole responsibility from the brothers for the state of divided rule and made the people of Thebes accountable too.[529] It is, therefore, no wonder that the Irish author chose

[529] Lactantius's commentary on *Thebaid*, I.138–141 makes no suggestion that the people of Thebes were involved in the decision to rule by alternate years (*ISTC*, I.469–76). Perhaps the intervention of the Thebans in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* was inspired by a vernacular literary context. For instance,

to leave out Statius's moralizing apostrophe to the brothers, for he had rendered it obsolete. The loss of the poet's subjective intervention in the narrative is further demonstrated by the objectivity with which the Irish author depicts the decision to cast lots for which of the brothers should rule Thebes first (*TnT*, 219–21). The imagery from the epic of Eteocles as tyrannical monarch has been replaced by an impartial description of the way in which the lots were cast and the outcome. By not including the poet's apostrophes, the Irish narrative distances the reader from the poet's focus on the *ira* and *furor* which drive Eteocles and Polynices' quarrel.[530]

In the *Thebaid*, Statius depicted the dissatisfaction of the Theban populace with their monarchical situation at I.168–70 and used the Theban's complaint at I.173–96 to develop a sense of their powerlessness in this situation. Through the complaint, the anonymous critic questions how Thebes came to have a shared sovereignty and who is to blame. He asks if it is the Fates (I.174), the supreme creator of heaven and earth (I.178–80), or the result of Thebes' origins in fraternal warfare (I.180–85). The critic illustrates how divided rule unsettles Thebes through a ship of state simile which imagines Eteocles and Polynices as the winds in a storm pulling a ship in different directions (I.193–94). In contrast, while the translator of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* did highlight the Thebans' discontent with shared kingship at *TnT*, 222–24, he also emphasised their role in making the decision at *TnT*, 221–22. The Irish author stripped the anonymous critic's speech down to a reworked version of the 'ship of state' simile, which draws the reader's attention to the discord of shared sovereignty.[531] Following the premise that the Thebans helped create the state of division they find themselves in, the Irish narrative does not engage with the complainant's concern in the *Thebaid* about the Theban people's lack of power. Therefore, it appears that these apostrophes from *Thebaid* Book I were left out as part of a wider process of reinterpretation by the Irish author.

In the following example from *Thebaid* Book V, the Irish author chose to rework Statius's apostrophe into descriptive narrative, a decision which appears to have been based on the essential plot information which the apostrophe contained. In *Thebaid* Book V Opheltes, the child in Hypsipyle's charge, is killed accidently by a serpent while she narrates the tale of the Lemnian women to the Argives (V.49–498). Statius recounts Opheltes' death in an apostrophe directed at the child:

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although the narratives are not directly comparable, note that in *Scéla Conchobair Maic Nessa* Conchobar is granted the kingship of Ulster over Fergus through the counsel of the Ulstermen: see 'Tidings of Conchobar Mac Nessa', ed. and trans. Whitley Stokes, *Ériu*, 4 (1910), 18–38 (p. 24).

[530] Statius's apostrophe to Eteocles and Polynices after their fratricide at *Thebaid*, XI.574–79 is also removed from the Middle Irish *Thebaid* (cf. *TnT*, 4555–56).

[531] For a detailed discussion on the translation of this 'ship of state' simile in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* (*TnT*, 227–32), see **Chapter 6:3.1**.

Quis tibi, parve, deus tam magni pondera fati | sorte dedit? tune hoc vix prima ad limina vitae | hoste iaces? an ut inde sacer per saecula Grais | gentibus et tanto dignus morerere sepulcro? | occidis extremae destrictus verbere caudae | ignaro serpente, puer; fugit ilicet artus | somnus, et in solam patuerunt lumina mortem. | cum tamen attonito moriens vagitus in auras | excidit et ruptis immutuit ore querelis, | qualia non totas peragunt insomnia voces, | audiit Hypsipyle, facilemque negantia cursum | exanimis genua aegra rapit. (*Thebaid*, V.534–45)	Et rus-bean bem da heirr gan airigud di don maccæm sin, co rus-facaib cen anmain. O 'tchualaig tra Ipsifile scret in mic aca marbad, roerich da iarraid, 7 robai 'ga gairm. (*TnT*, 2074–77)
What god's allotting, little one, gave you the burden of so great a fate? By this enemy do you lie low scarcely at life's first threshold? Or was it to make you die sacred through the ages henceforth to the peoples of Greece, worthy of so grand a tomb? Grazed by the lash of the tail tip, you perish, child, and the snake knows not of it. Sleep fled your limbs straightway and your eyes opened only to death. But when from your shocked lips a dying wail passed out upon the air and the plaint hushed broken like the unfinished utterances of a dream, Hypsipyle heard.	And it struck that little boy with a stroke of its tail without noticing, so that it left him lifeless. Then Hypsipyle heard the scream of the dying boy, she arose to seek him, and was calling him.

Statius's address is focused both on conveying the tragedy of Opheltes' premature death and hinting at the sacred status it achieves him.[532] The Irish author paraphrased Statius's apostrophe, removing the author's rhetorical questions and providing instead only a short description of the child's accidental death and Hypsipyle's reaction.

The preceding description of the serpent from *Thebaid*, V.505–33 was, however, more closely translated in the Middle Irish text (*TnT*, 2061–74). Statius built up a sense of terror around the serpent's arrival in the meadow where Opheltes had been left, calling the it 'nemoris sacer horror Achaei' ('holy horror of the Achaean wood') (*Thebaid*, V.505) and emphasising how venomous the creature is (*Thebaid*, V.508–09). The Middle Irish narrative echoes the threat which the serpent poses to the child:

[532] Opheltes is renamed Archemorus and declared a god by Amphiaraus at *Thebaid*, V.733–52. For opposing views of the meaning of Opheltes' death see Vessey, pp. 187–91 and Dominik, *Speech and Rhetoric*, pp. 126–29.

> Et in am robai andsin, tanic nathair adhuathmar urbadach da indsaigid. Is amlaidh robai i[n] nathair sin 7 ruisc dimora dubglasa ’na ceand co n-uanfad neimi. (*TnT*, 2061–64)
>
> And while he was there a terrible baneful serpent came towards him. And this is what that serpent was like, very large dark-green eyes in its head with a foam of poison.

The definition between the serpent's eyes and its mouth were lost in the Irish description. The livid fire in the serpent's eyes ('livida fax oculis', *Thebaid*, V.508) merged with the imagery of the poisonous green foam in its mouth ('tumidi stat in ore veneni | spuma virens') (*Thebaid*, V.508–09), forming the Irish depiction of the serpent, 'ruisc dimora dubglasa 'na ceand co n-uanfad neimi' ('very large dark-green eyes in its head with a foam of poison') (*TnT*, 2063–64). The Statian serpent's mouth (*os*, *Thebaid*, V.508) became its *cend* 'head' in the Irish text.

Although the serpent kills Opheltes quite accidently in both Statius's epic and the Irish translation, both narrators develop a sense of impending tragedy through their portrayal of the venomous serpent as it approaches the child in the meadow. Indeed, the horror which the serpent inspires is portrayed in direct contrast to the vulnerability and innocence of Opheltes (*Thebaid*, IV.793–803, cf. *TnT*, 1786–90). Statius's apostrophe delays the action to dwell on the meaning of the child's death and appears to have been designed to elicit a greater feeling of sentimental pathos from the situation.[533] In contrast, the Irish author adopted a more objective response to the scene, which did not attempt to instruct the reader's emotional response to the same extent and brought Opheltes' death and Hypsipyle's concern for the child into focus sooner and with greater immediacy.

The descriptive style which the Irish author adopted in the reworking of Statius's apostrophe above recalls the detached and reductive style of narrative which Poppe identifies in the adaptation of the descriptive passages from Virgil's *Aeneid* Book VIII to *Imtheachta Aeniasa*.[534] This reductive response also recalls the practice of paraphrasing in vernacular translation.[535] Copeland writes that '[P]araphrasing can encompass a range of practices, from glossing the individual word to reformulating sentences or larger blocks of text, to previewing or recapitulating whole sections or episodes by means of summaries'.[536] While the translator may have been working to develop a narrative which fitted the objective style of his native literature, his methods appear to be in line with a wider tradition of medieval critical techniques. The examples discussed in this section also highlight that omission and abbreviation were not simply a means to shorten the epic narrative as it was rendered into

[533] Vessey, p. 188.
[534] Poppe, '*Imtheachta Aeniasa*', p. 81.
[535] Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation*, pp. 97–150.
[536] Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation*, p. 83.

Irish, it also enabled the translator to appropriate the tale, reworking elements of Statius's *Thebaid* to develop his own creative response to the poem.

5.2.2 Speeches

The author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* used abbreviation and paraphrase to render most of Statius's characters' direct speeches.[537] While the majority of these speeches remained in an abbreviated form of direct speech, 25 were reworked and abbreviated into authorial narrative as indirect speeches. This includes Jupiter's lengthy diktat explaining his resolution to punish Thebes and Argos for generations of sin (*Thebaid*, I.214–48) which was omitted almost entirely. In the *Thebaid*, Jupiter's speech sets out his reasons to punish the *nocentum* ('guilty'). He first explains that he is weary of punishing men and that he suffered when he was forced to strike down Phaëthon (I.215–21). Then he draws attention to the crimes for which he holds Thebes and Argos accountable (I.224–32) yet makes it clear that Oedipus has already been punished enough for his transgressions (I.233–39). Jupiter claims that he will answer Oedipus's prayer and thus act as his avenger (I.239–41).[538] He makes his role in bringing about the war between Thebes and Argos explicit (I.241–43): 'nova sontibus arma | iniciam regnis, totumque a stirpe revellam | exitiale genus' ('I shall bring new warfare on the guilty reigns and tear the whole deadly stock out from the root'). William Dominik observes that:

> [T]he forensic speech of Jupiter functions dramatically as the supreme causative speech of the entire epic since it is the prime motivating factor behind the rest of the of the action in the poem and furnishes the motives for the numerous destructive actions of other malevolent deities, notably Mars and the Furies.[539]

In contrast, Jupiter's role in bringing about the war at Thebes is significantly diminished in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*:

> Is i sin oes 7 fuair 7 aimsear doroindi Ioib, mac sona saidbir Satuirn, conni 7 comairli risna haireachtaib dimoraib diadaib, ca digail daberad arna Tiauandaib 7 arna Grecaib isna olcaib doronsad. (*TnT*, 575–78)
>
> That is the time and hour and period that Jupiter, Saturn's happy rich son, held a meeting and counsel with the vast assemblies of gods as to what vengeance he should inflict on the Thebans and on the Greeks for the evils they had done.

[537] Or as Harris scathingly puts it, 'the *Thebaid*'s many lengthy flights of grandiloquent oratory are always trimmed', Harris, p. 163.
[538] Although it should be noted that Oedipus's prayer was made to Tisiphone, not Jupiter; see Ahl, pp. 2838–39.
[539] Dominik, *Speech and Rhetoric*, p. 38.

In contrast to Statius's use of direct speech to convey Jupiter's intentions, the translator reported a brief synopsis of his words in indirect speech. This paraphrase of Jupiter's intentions was merged with a description of the assembly of the gods at *Thebaid*, I.197–213, both of which were radically reduced in the Irish version.

The Middle Irish narrative does focus on Jupiter's intention to bring *dígal* ('vengeance') on the Thebans and the Greeks, but there is none of the explanatory information which the Statian Jupiter provided to support his decision. In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, Jupiter's decision to act is not represented as a response to Oedipus's prayer. The deity's role in instigating the war at Thebes is more ambiguous, as the action Jupiter takes is to request that Mercury raise Laius from the dead, 'co ndernad 7 co n-adandad irgail, 7 anindi, cothnud 7 comchosnum iter a uib .i. Ethiocles 7 Polinices' ('so that he might make and incite strife and anger, mutual jealousy and contention between his grandsons, that is, Eteocles and Polynices') (*TnT*, 582–84). Thus, the violence of Jupiter's promise to destroy both the Theban and Argive family line in the *Thebaid* is dissipated in the Irish narrative. By abbreviating Jupiter's speech, the Irish author consequently downplayed the deity's role in motivating the war at Thebes.

This is also the case when Jupiter responds to Bacchus's plea that Thebes be protected from war (*TnT*, 2617–22; cf. *Thebaid*, VII.155–92). Statian Jupiter is apologetic to his son: he draws on the role of Fate in bringing about the war (VII.197–98, 216–19) and emphasises how unwilling he is to occasion punishment (VII.202–06) but explains that the offences of the Thebans have gone too far (VII.207–14). He tells Bacchus 'Labdacios vero Pelopisque a stirpe nepotes | tardum abolere mihi' ('But the progeny of Labdacus and Pelops it is high time for me to abolish by the root') (VII.207–09). Yet, despite having declared that he intends to destroy both Thebes and Argos, Jupiter informs Bacchus that Thebes will survive this war (VII.219–21).[540] There is no such reprieve in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, where Jupiter tells Bacchus:

> '[N]i fich na ferg dobeir orum comorad in chatha-sa. Acht[541] ro-chindsead faidi 7 fisid o thus domuin co cuirfithea in cath croda-sa na Tebi. Et na bid ecla ortsu, a Baich, togail na Tebi don chur-sa, 7 amæ dlestis a n-olc do denam, uair is adbul a n-ecoiri.' (*TnT*, 2624–29)

> '[I]t is not fury or wrath that makes me wage this war. But prophets and learned men from the beginning of the world have decided that this cruel war of Thebes would be waged. And do not fear, O Bacchus, the sack of Thebes just now, and indeed they may deserve evil to be done them, for their wickedness is vast.'

[540] Jupiter makes it clear, however, that Thebes will be destroyed at a later date: 'veniet suspectior aetas | ultoresque alii' ('a more dangerous hour shall come and other avengers') (*Thebaid*, VII.220–21).
[541] Calder includes the *is ed* from the Egerton 1781 text here, I omit it.

Although it is heavily abridged the format of direct speech is retained. Jupiter denies personal responsibility for the destruction of Thebes and explains that he supports the war because the Thebans 'dlestis a n-olc do denam' ('may deserve evil to be done them') (*TnT*, 2628). His description of the Thebans' *éccóire* ('wickedness') (*TnT*, 2629) recalls his desire to bring vengeance on the Thebans and Greeks for the 'isna olcaib doronsad' ('for the evils they had done') (*TnT*, 578). However, in contrast to Statius's portrayal of Jupiter, the Irish author presented a deity who is not swayed by mercy.[542] Thebes will be sacked, a promise which Bacchus is oddly glad to receive (*TnT*, 2629).[543] The use of paraphrase alters Statius's depiction of Jupiter's complex role in bringing about the war at Thebes. No longer is the reader presented with a deity who has supreme command over the affairs of men.[544] Instead, in the Irish vernacular Jupiter appears to be the executor of an ambiguous vengeance and powerless to be swayed from the destruction of Thebes.

There are other significant speeches from the *Thebaid* which depict the instigation of specific actions in the narrative which are lost due to the translator's use of paraphrase. At the end of *Thebaid* Book VII, Amphiaraus falls alive in his chariot into the Underworld after a great chasm opens on the battlefield (VII.816–23). At the beginning of Book VIII his arrival in Tartarus interrupts Dis, the Lord of Erebus, holding court to decide on how best to punish the misdeeds of men (VIII.21–23). When Dis realises his realm is exposed to the stars (VIII.31–33) he breaks into an extensive speech asking if his kingdom is under attack (VIII.34–65), before sending out the Fury, Tisiphone, to avenge the perceived insult (VIII.66–79).[545] Dis's speech sets out a series of violations which will happen on the battlefields at Thebes:

> 'atque adeo fratres (nostrique haec omina sunto
> prima odii), fratres alterna in vulnera laeto
> Marte ruant; sit qui rabidarum more ferarum
> mandat atrox hostile caput, quique igne supremo
> arceat exanimes et manibus aethera nudis
> commaculet: iuvet ista ferum spectare Tonantem.
> praeterea ne sola furor mea regna lacessat,
> quaere deis qui bella ferat, qui fulminis ignes

[542] See Vessey, pp. 90–91.
[543] 'Ba forbailid Baich dona scelaib sin' ('Bacchus was very glad at those tidings') (*TnT*, 2629). The use of *forfaílid*, *eDIL* s.v. *forfaílid*, *forb(f)aelid*, here to describe Bacchus's reaction may rely on Lactantius's commentary on *Thebaid*, VII.222, which explains, 'Ergo audita <o>ratione Iouis uno Liber tempore ornatum laetitiamque recepit' ('Therefore, having heard Jupiter's speech, Liber at once recovered his dress and joy') (*ISTC*, VII.442–43).
[544] As demonstrated by Dominik, *Speech and Rhetoric*, pp. 203–04.
[545] Hardie has noted the parallels between this and Allecto's ascent from the Underworld in *Aeneid* Book VII, which no doubt Statius intended his readers to recall. See Hardie, pp. 79–80. See also Antony Augoustakis, ed., trans., and commentary, *Statius. Thebaid 8. Edited with an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Oxford: OUP, 2016), pp. 94–97.

> infestumque Iovem clipeo fumante repellat.'
> (*Thebaid*, VIII.69–77)
>
> 'Or rather let brothers (and let this be the first omen of our hate), ay brothers, rush to kill one another in joyous strife. Let there be a savage who like a rabid wild beast gnaws his enemy's head and another who bans the lifeless from final fire and pollutes the air with naked dead. Let the brutal Thunderer enjoy the sights. Furthermore, let the madness not challenge my kingdom only. Seek one to make war upon the gods and repel the fires of the thunderbolt and angry Jupiter with his smoking shield.'

Dis's directive to Tisiphone provides the impetus for Eteocles and Polynices' fratricide (XI.497–574, cf. *TnT*, 4488–4555), Tydeus's cannibalism (VIII.751–62, cf. *TnT*, 3326–37), Creon's refusal to allow the burial of the Argive dead (XI.661–64, cf. *TnT*, 4586–89), and Capaneus's blasphemy (X.925–26, cf. *TnT*, 4271–74).

In contrast to the detail which Dis's direct speech provides in the *Thebaid*, the Irish author provided only a short report in indirect speech:

> Et tuc Oirc, ri ifirn, athais mor ar deib nuaglana nime 'man fer sin do lecud chuci, 7 dorigni spraic moir 7 tomaitheam adbul ar Ampiaraus badesin. (*TnT*, 2948–50)
>
> And Orcus, king of hell, heaped great reproach on the fresh bright gods of heaven about allowing that man to come to him, and he made great reprimand and vast menace against Amphiaraus himself.

The reader is told that Orcus, an alternative name for Dis, heaped 'athais mor' ('great reproach') (*TnT*, 2948) on the gods of heaven, but there is no mention of the horrors which he sent Tisiphone to accomplish. The narrative also relates that Orcus made 'spraic moir' ('great reprimand') (*TnT*, 2949) against Amphiaraus, but the reasons for the god's objections are lost. In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, Orcus is not accountable for the abominations which take place on the battlefield at Thebes.

5.3 Micro approaches: constant clarifications and standardisations

In **Chapter 4**, I demonstrated how commentary material was incorporated into the Theban narrative: this is a process of exposition which can be viewed within medieval translation practice as *enarratio poetarum*. This interpretative approach to developing the Irish narrative can also be demonstrated at a micro level in the translator's response to specific aspects of Statius's language within the epic. The difficulty and obscurity of Statius's Latin has been well

acknowledged by modern translators.[546] Although the opportunity to adapt Statius's language was more open to the medieval translator, the challenge of understanding the epic to begin with was no less difficult. The Middle Irish *Thebaid* is testament to these interpretative concerns. In this section, I explore how Statius's use of names was approached by the Irish translator. How were obscure elements of Statius's language dealt with? What strategies did the translator employ?

5.3.1 Greek patronymics

Statius regularly used Greek patronymic forms, such as *Oedipodionides*, *Talaiomides*, and *Amphitryoniades,* in the *Thebaid*.[547] Not only are these often obscure, but they are frequently loaded with meaning.[548] In the Middle Irish *Thebaid* these Greek patronymics were omitted and replaced with either the Irish patronymic formula 'x *mac* y', or more simply the character's forename.[549] At *Thebaid*, I.313 the poet described Polynices using the Greek patronymic *Oedipodionides* ('the son of Oedipus').[550] In the corresponding translation at *TnT,* 233 *Oedipodionides* was replaced with the Irish patronymic *Polinices mac Eidip* ('Polynices son of Oedipus'). In the two other instances where *Oedipodionides* was translated in the Middle Irish text, the translator only provided the character's first name.[551] It is not clear why the Irish author chose to interpret only the forenames of Oedipus's sons in these latter examples. However, the use of *id est* ('that is') to introduce Polynices' name at *TnT*, 2345 appears to highlight this as an act of exegesis on the part of the translator.

[546] For an overview, see Susanna Braund, 'Naturalizing Statius', in *Brill's Companion to Statius*, ed. by Dominik, Newlands, and Gervais, pp. 579–99 (pp. 583–84).
[547] *Thebaid*, I.313, I.486, II.141, IV.491, V.18, V.401, VI.426, VII.216, VIII.499, XI.47.
[548] See Jean-Michel Hulls and John Michael Hulls, 'What's in a name? Repetition of names in Statius's *Thebaid*', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 49 (2006), 131–144 (p. 135); and Deborah Hershkowitz, 'Sexuality and Madness in Statius' *Thebaid*', *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici*, 33 (1994), 123–47 (p. 128).
[549] For comparison with the treatment of personal names in *Togail Troí* see Myrick, pp. 129–30.
[550] Cf. *Thebaid*, IV.491, VI.426, VII.216. See, Statius, *Thebaid VII*, p. 109. Ruth Parkes views the phrase as a Statian coinage, see Ruth Parkes, ed. and trans., with commentary, *Statius. Thebaid 4* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), p. 239.
[551] *TnT*, 1651 'Ethiocles' ('Eteocles') cf. *Thebaid*, IV.491 and *TnT*, 2345 '.i. Polinices' ('that is, Polynices'), cf. *Thebaid*, VI.426.

Table 8: Comparison between the Greek patronymics for Adrastus in the *Thebaid* and the Middle Irish *Thebaid*

Thebaid	Greek patronymic	*TnT*	Name and patronymic
I.541	'Iasides'	488	'Adraist mac Iasis mic Danaus mic Forneus' ('Adrastus, son of Iasius, son of Danaus, son of Phoroneus')
II.141	'Talaionides'	646	'Adraist'
V.18	'Talaionides'	1819	'Adraist'
VI.722	'gemitus Talao'	2496-98	Not translated
VI.914	'Iasides'	2575	'Adraist'

Alison Keith and Nicholas Dee have both noted how Statius's use of the patronymic *Oedipodionides* links Eteocles and Polynices to Oedipus's problematic history.[552] In adapting Statius's epic into the Irish vernacular, the poet's allusion to Oedipal family history was reworked and the familial associations alluded to through the poet's use of Greek patronymics were not always translated. The identification of who Statius's Greek patronymic referred to, rather than a full translation of the patronymic itself, appears to have been the greater priority for the Irish author. An approach which offers modern scholars a window into what the translator perceived to be necessary information for his audience.

In the next example, the Irish translator's reworking of a Statian reference to Adrastus as *Iasides* ('Iasus' scion', *Thebaid*, I.541) appears to demonstrate an editorial decision regarding the identification of Adrastus's parentage throughout the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. Statius used the name *Iasides* to refer to Adrastus as descending from Iasus; however, it refers to his ancestral lineage rather than direct parentage. The poet established Adrastus's father as Talaus using the Greek patronymic *Talaionides* ('the son of Talaus', *Thebaid*, II.141). In **Table 8** Statius's use of *Iasides* and *Talaionides* are compared with the Irish author's treatment of the names.

In contrast to Statius the Irish author never identifies Talaus as Adrastus's father. This decision appears to stem from the translator's response to Statius's first reference to Adrastus as *Iasides* at in *Thebaid* Book I. In the epic poem, when Adrastus requests the richly decorated bowl which accompanies the Argive rites to Phoebus he is identified as *Iasides*:

[552] Alison Keith, 'Ovid's Theban narrative in Statius' *Thebaid*', *Hermathena*, 177/178, *Aetas Ovidiana?* (2004 - 2005), 181–207 (p. 187) and Nicholas Dee, 'Wasted Water: The Failure of Purification in the *Thebaid*', in *Ritual and Religion in Flavian Epic*, ed. by Antony Augoustakis (Oxford: OUP, 2013), pp. 181–98 (p. 194).

> postquam ordine mensae
> victa fames, signis perfectam auroque nitentem
> Iasides pateram famulos ex more poposcit,
> qua Danaus libare deis seniorque Phoroneus
> assueti. (*Thebaid*, I.539–43)
>
> When appetite was vanquished by the course of the banquet, Iasus' scion, as was his custom, asked the attendants to bring the bowl wrought with reliefs and shining with gold wherefrom Danaus and old Phoroneus used to pour libations to the gods.

In the Irish translation the goblet is depicted being put into the hands 'in rig uasail Adraist mic Iasis mic Danaus mic Forneus' ('of the noble king Adrastus, son of Iasius, son of Danaus, son of Phoroneus') (*TnT,* 488). The Irish author took 'Iasius's scion' to mean Adrastus's father and extended the patronymic into a genealogical string by including Danaus as Iasus's father and Phoroneus as Danaus's father. This extended patronymic, which identifies Adrastus as Iasus's son, is the only one given for the Argive king throughout the Middle Irish *Thebaid*.

The translation of *Iasides* as a patronymic in the Irish text may rely on Lactantius's corresponding commentary to *Thebaid*, I.541–43, which explains:

> <Iasides> patronymicum [Iasii filius] <EX MORE > ab antiquis ducibus ducto. <SENIOR ... PHORONEUS> qui ante Danaum fuit. Iasius et Phoroneus antiqui reges Argiuorum fuere, qui primi Iunoni sacrificauerunt. (*ISTC,* I.1559–62)
>
> <Iasides> a patronym [the son of Iasus]') <IN ACCORDANCE WITH A CUSTOM> drawn from ancient leaders. <OLD PHORONEUS> who was before Danaus. Iasus and Phoroneus were ancient kings of the Argives, who first sacrificed to Juno.

Lactantius's commentary here conflicts with Statius's use of *Iasides* to indicate Adrastus's ancestry rather than as a direct patronym. The Irish author appears to have followed this attribution from Lactantius when he translated *Iasides* as a patronymic at *TnT*, 488. The translator's choice of patronymic here appears to have informed his general approach to translating Greek patronymics identifying Adrastus throughout the Middle Irish *Thebaid*; none of which conflict with this first patronymic.[553] Thus, the Irish author's minor act of exegesis here is evidence of an editorial decision which was consistently followed throughout the translation.

Further evidence of the vernacular author's approach to translating Statius's patronymics is found elsewhere in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. For instance, at *Thebaid,* V. 401

[553] In contrast, at *ISTC*, V.69–70 (cf. *Thebaid*, V.18) Lactantius explains 'DUX TALAIONIDES <Adrastus>, Talai et Eurynomes filius' ('THE LEADER, TALAUS'S SON <Adrastus>, the son of Talaus and Eurynome').

Hercules is referred to as 'Amphitryoniades' ('Amphitryon's son') which is translated as '.i. Ercoil mac Ampitriontis' ('that is, Hercules son of Amphitryon') (*TnT*, 1994–95).[554] Later in the text, *Amphitryoniades* is given as simply 'Ercoil' (*TnT*, 3173, cf. *Thebaid*, VIII. 499).

5.3.2 Forenames

Conversely, there are many examples where Statius referred to a character by a forename in the *Thebaid* and which the Irish author translated with a patronymic. Examples are given in **Table 9**. As well as showing how the Irish author expanded forenames to include patronymics in the Irish text, the examples in the table also demonstrate that the translator altered personal names to conform with Irish morphology. This is an approach which Myrick highlights in the redactor's adaptation of personal names in first and second recensions of *Togail Troí*.[555]

The Irish author's approach to translating forenames from the *Thebaid* does not appear to have been consistent. The translator did not always provide a forename and patronymic where a forename was given in the *Thebaid*. Rather, he appears to have responded to the context of the text he was rendering into Irish, making the decision of how to portray names on a case-by-case basis. For example, during Hypsipyle's narration of the tale of the Lemnian women in *Thebaid* Book V, she mentions her father at lines 38, 239, 266 and 486. When Hypsipyle introduces herself to the Argive host she says,

> 'claro generata Thoante
> servitium Hypsipyle vestri fero capta Lycurgi.'
> (*Thebaid*, V.38–39)
>
> 'I am Hypsipyle, child of famous Thoas; a captive, I bear the thraldom of your Lycurgus.'

The introduction is reworked in the Irish to place emphasis on Thoas's name and ancestry:

> 'Acht chena is e Toaint, mac Baich, m' athair-sea, 7 Ipsifile m' ainm fen, 7 a ndoiri atú ac Ligoric do uar munter-si.' (*TnT*, 1827–29)
>
> 'Indeed Thoas, son of Bacchus, is my father, and my own name is Hypsipyle, and I am in bondage to Lycurgus of your people.'

[554] This patronymic for Hercules was also known to the author of the first recension of *Togail Troí*, Myrick, p. 101.
[555] Myrick, pp. 115–16.

Table 9: Examples of character forenames in the *Thebaid* translated in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* as forename and patronymic

Thebaid	Character forename	*TnT*	Character forename and patronymic
I.680	Cadmus	563	'Caithim mac Agenoir' ('of Cadmus, son of Agenor')
V.38	Thoas	1827	'Toaint, mac Baich' ('Thoas, son of Bacchus')
V.406	Iason	1997	'Iason mac Eson' ('Jason, son of Aeson')
V.432	Theseus	2020	'Teis, mac Eig, mic Neptuin' ('Theseus, son of Aegeus, son of Neptune')
V.443	Hylas	2025	'Illes mac Ercail' ('Hylas, son of Hercules')
V.671	Tydeus	2138	'Tid mac Oeniusa' ('Tydeus, son of Oeneus')
VIII.243	Oedipoden	2993	'Eidip mac Laiuis' ('Oedipus, son of Laius')
VIII.365	Thiodamas	3044	'Tiodamos mac Melampas' ('Thiodamas, son of Melampus')

Later in her narrative, when Hypsipyle describes seeing Alcimede carrying her father's severed head (*Thebaid,* V.236–39), she explains,

> 'meus ille Thoas, mea dira videri
> dextra mihi! extemplo thalamis turbata paternis
> inferor.' (*Thebaid,* V.239–41)
>
> 'To me he seemed my Thoas and the fell hand seemed mine. Forthwith I hie me distraught to my father's chamber.'

In the Irish vernacular Hypsipyle says,

> 'Et [o] adchondarcas-[s]a sin, rogab ecla 7 adfuath me, 7 tanac-sa im baidb[556] buaidertha co tech m' athar .i. Toaint.' (*TnT,* 1898–1900)
>
> 'And when I saw that, fear and horror seized me, and I came as a troubled Fury to the house of my father, that is, Thoas.'

The translation removes the complex imagery of Hypsipyle imagining Alcimede's father's head as that of Thoas. Consequently, Statius's reference to Thoas at *Thebaid,* V.239 did not

[556] At *TnT,* 1899 Calder translates *badb* as 'ghost'. However, in accordance with the Irish translator's association of the Badb with the Furies and the war goddess Bellona as discussed below, I have provided 'Fury'. See *eDIL* s.v. *badb.*

appear in the Irish vernacular text. However, Thoas's name then appears in a different context at *TnT*, 1900 to clarify that he is Hypsipyle's father and that it is to his house she goes. By intruding on Hypsipyle's speech and providing this exegesis the Irish translator can be seen to have prioritized the reader's comprehension of the episode over the dramatic movement of the narrative.

The use of *badb* to describe Hypsipyle at *TnT*, 1899, raises intriguing questions for the modern reader. In medieval Irish translation literature, the name is generally associated with the Furies.[557] Imagery of the Badb was used throughout the Middle Irish *Thebaid* to depict the Furies and the war goddess Bellona, as can be seen, for instance, in the cases of Tisiphone (*TnT*, 193–94, cf. *Thebaid*, I.89–91), Bellona (*TnT*, 1365, 1369, cf. *Thebaid*, IV.6 and 9–12), the Furies (*TnT*, 1875–76, cf. *Thebaid*, V.152–55; *TnT*, 3018 and 3024, cf. *Thebaid*, VIII.344–56) and Enyo (*TnT*, 3246–47, cf. *Thebaid*, VIII.655–56). In using the word *badb* to describe Hypsipyle at *TnT*, 1899 the implication appears to be that her distress was 'Fury-like'.

The episode in which Hypsipyle helps her father escape Lemnos was reworked in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* from a first-person narrative into the third person (*TnT*, 1904–44, cf. *Thebaid*, V.248–339). At *Thebaid*, V.248–95 Hypsipyle describes how Thyoneus (another name for Bacchus) makes an appearance to aid 'nato [...] Thoanti' ('his son Thoas') (*Thebaid*, V.266). This is translated into the Middle Irish as 'a mic Toaint .i. a hathar-si' ('his son Thoas, that is, her own father') (*TnT*, 1913). The reference to Thoas was not reworked to include a patronymic here, yet, the Irish author's concern to ensure that the characters' relationships were understood is demonstrated by an *id est* noting that Thoas is Hypsipyle's father.

In the *Thebaid*, Hypsipyle later describes how the women of Lemnos came to realise that she had not taken part in the Lemnian massacre and that her father had escaped:

> 'Fama subit portus vectum trans alta Thoanta
> fraterna regnare Chio, mihi crimina nulla
> et vacuos arsisse rogos.' (*Thebaid*, V.486–88)
>
> 'Rumour comes to the harbour, telling that Thoas has crossed the deep and reigns in his brother's Chios, that I am innocent, that the burning pyre was empty.'

Again, the speech is reworked in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*:

> 'Asa haithli sin tra adchualadar mna indsi Lemin m' athair-sea do beth i rigi indsi Chio, indsi dearbrathar do .i. Cuuis mic Baich.' (*TnT*, 2049–51)

[557] Further discussion on medieval Irish perceptions of the Furies and their association with the Badb can be found in Michael Clarke 'Demonology, Allegory and Translation: The Furies and the Morrígan', in *Classical Literature and Learning*, ed. by O'Connor, pp. 101–22.

> 'After that, however, the women of the isle of Lemnos heard that my father was in the kingship of the isle of Chios, the isle of his brother, that is, Chios, son of Bacchus.'

The translator's concern to name characters is highlighted in this passage by the identification of Thoas's brother as 'Cuuis mac Baich' ('Chios, son of Bacchus') (*TnT*, 2050–51) after 'fraterna regnare Chio' ('he reigns in his brother's Chios') (*Thebaid*, V.487). The Irish author's exegesis is in error here as he has taken the place name Chios as the name of Thoas's brother.[558]

The Irish translator also changed Hypsipyle's reference to *Thoas* at *Thebaid*, V.486 to 'm' athair-sea' ('my father') (*TnT*, 2049–50). This alteration appears to have been unnecessary given the dramatic context of the passage and the fact that the reader has already been made aware of who Hypsipyle's father is. When the women of Lemnos discover Hypsipyle's innocence she is forced to escape. In the *Thebaid*, Hypsipyle describes how she flees the city, attempting to leave 'qua fuga nota patris' ('by the known path of my father's plight') (*Thebaid*, V.496). In the Middle Irish narrative, Hypsipyle's reference to her father is clarified with '.i. Toaint' ('that is, Thoas') (*TnT*, 2055).[559] Once again, the Irish author highlights who the character is. These exegetical interruptions in Hypsipyle's speech create a sense of objectivity within her dialogue as the reader is regularly distanced from the dramatic action of Hypsipyle's tale by the intrusion of additional information.

5.3.3 Geographical epithets

Statius often used geographical epithets in the *Thebaid* to reference characters. These epithets, which associate a character with a specific place (e.g. Thebes) or named geographical feature (e.g. the river Ismenus) are often inserted immediately before a character's name or in place of a specific character's name. For instance, when Statius describes Tydeus leaving Calydon at *Thebaid*, I. 401 he calls him 'Olenius Tydeus' (*Thebaid*, I. 402). In the Irish vernacular the reference to Olenus is left out and Tydeus is referred to as 'Tid trom trentachrach mac Oenís mac rig cuanda cathbuadach Calidone' ('mighty strong warlike Tydeus son of Oeneus, son of the fine battle-victorious king of Calydon') (*TnT*, 345). By introducing Tydeus in this way, the translator cemented the reader's association of the warrior with Calydon and subsequently a version of the Calydonian boar hunt which follows at *TnT*, 348–65 (see **Chapter 4:4.2**). The

[558] There is nothing in Lactantius to suggest either this patronymic or that Chios was the name of Thoas's brother (cf. *ISTC*, V.1016–20). According to Apollodorus, Oenopion was Thoas's brother and son of Bacchus and Ariadne (*Bibliotheca*, Epitome of Book IV.1.9).
[559] Calder's English translation takes no account of the *id est* at *TnT*, 2055.

language used, which includes alliterating couplets, is also highly indicative of Irish vernacular narrative conventions.[560]

Statius varied his use of geographical epithets for Tydeus, who he names 'Calydonius heros' (*Thebaid*, II.476) and 'Acheloius heros' (*Thebaid*, VIII.522). In contrast, the Irish author more consistently and frequently associated Tydeus with Calydon using variants of the patronymic *mac Oenius ri na Calidone* ('son of Oeneus, king of Calydon') and *Tid mac rig na Calidone* ('Tydeus son of the king of Calydon'), or simply *mac rig na Calidone* ('the son of the king of Calydon'). The patronymic *Tid mac Oeneus* ('Tydeus, son of Oeneus') was also used. The Irish author's employment of these variants was based largely on instances where Statius provided only Tydeus's forename.[561] The translator also used this approach to interpret the poet's use of the Greek patronymic *Oenides* at *Thebaid*, VIII.588 (cf. *TnT*, 3218), an instance where the character was indicated by the demonstrative adjective *ipse* at *Thebaid*, VIII.733 (cf. *TnT*, 3308), and two occasions where Tydeus's identification was only alluded to (*Thebaid*, II.601–02, cf. *TnT*, 988; and *Thebaid*, VIII.548–53, cf. *TnT*, 3198–99). Although the Irish variants which link Tydeus with Calydon appear to be positive in their association, by reminding the reader that he is the son of a king, the translator's naming strategies may also act to remind the reader of Tydeus's role in the Calydonian boar hunt and his fratricide of Meleager.

Further examples demonstrating the Irish translator's response to Statius's geographical epithets include the reference to Polynices as 'iuvenis Thebane' ('the young Theban') at *Thebaid*, I.430, which is glossed in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* as '.i. Polinices' ('that is, Polynices') (*TnT*, 407). At *Thebaid*, I.671–72, when Adrastus asks Polynices to identify himself, Statius portrays his reluctance to reply,

> Deiecit maestos extemplo Ismenius heros
> in terram vultus, taciteque ad Tydea laevum
> obliquare oculos. (*Thebaid*, I.673–75)
>
> Forthwith the Ismenian hero cast sad eyes down to the earth and silently looked askance at Tydeus on his left.

[560] See Poppe, '*Imtheachta Aeniasa*', p. 75 and Myrick, pp. 88–91. A useful discussion on the development of alliterative patterns in medieval Ireland is also found in Uáitéar Mac Gearailt, 'Change and Innovation in Eleventh-Century Prose Narrative in Irish' in *(Re)Oralisierung*, ed. by Hildegard L. C. Tristram, Script Oralia; 84 (Tübingen: Narr, 1996), pp. 443–93 (pp. 444–50).

[561] See *TnT*, 385–86, cf. *Thebaid*, I.416; *TnT*, 430–31, cf. *Thebaid*, I.464; *TnT*, 557–58, cf. *Thebaid*, I.669; *TnT*, 631, cf. *Thebaid*, II.113; *TnT*, 879, cf. *Thebaid*, II.476; *TnT*, 988, cf. *Thebaid*, II.601–02; *TnT*, 3132, cf. *Thebaid*, VIII.458; *TnT*, 3141–42, cf. *Thebaid*, VIII.469; *TnT*, 3186, cf. *Thebaid*, VIII.522; *TnT*, 3208–09, cf. *Thebaid*, VIII.578; *TnT*, 3253–54, cf. *Thebaid*, VIII.663; *TnT*, 3294, cf. *Thebaid*, VIII.720; *TnT*, 3308, cf. *Thebaid*, VIII.733; *TnT*, 3980, cf. *Thebaid*, X.355; *TnT*, 4641, cf. *Thebaid*, XII.118; and *TnT*, 4888, cf. *Thebaid*, XII.763.

The Latin phrase *Ismenius heros* was reworked in the Middle Irish text to clarify that Polynices was the character referred to here,

> Et rochromastar in fear trebar Tiauandha sin a cheand .i. Polinices, 7 rodech secha uar Thid. (*TnT*, 559–60)
>
> And that prudent Theban man bowed his head, that is, Polynices, and looked aside at Tydeus.

The Irish translator's reworking may rely on Lactantius's explanation 'Polynices a fluuio Thebarum' ('Polynices from a river of Thebes') (*ISTC*, I.1835–36). The Irish author may have picked out the reference to Thebes in the commentary and used it for his own geographical epithet before clarifying that this refers to Polynices. In doing so, the geographic reference to the river Ismenus in the epithet from the *Thebaid* was abandoned.

5.3.4 Deities

In the sections above, we have seen how the Irish author responded to some of the references to the human characters of the *Thebaid*. Although the same approach appears to have been employed in translating Statian references to divine characters, the names of divinities seem to have been more consistently standardised than references to human characters. The naming of Apollo in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* provides an excellent example of how divine names were standardised. Like many of the characters in the *Thebaid*, Statius varied the names he used to describe Apollo throughout the epic.

This technique can be clearly seen in **Table 10** where references to the god from *Thebaid* Book I are listed alongside those from the corresponding vernacular narrative. From this table, we can see that the Latin *Phoebus* was uniformly reworked as *Apaill* in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*.[562] The translator also identified that the epithets *Paean* and *Thymbraeus* were references to Apollo. It is possible that this information was gleaned from Lactantius's commentary. For 'Thymbraean' at *Thebaid*, I.643 the exegete elucidated 'Thymbraeus dicitur Apollo sub herba thymbra, quae in templo Troados abundat' ('Apollo is called 'Thymbraeus' after the herb *thymbra*, which is abundant at the Trojan temple') (*ISTC*, I.1747–48). While there is no note for 'Paean' at *Thebaid*, I.636, if the translator had access to a full version of Lactantius's commentary, he could have inferred that *Paean* was an epithet for Apollo from

[562] In the historical prologue relating the tale of Cadmus (*TnT*, 9–82) the name Phoebus was also standardised as Apollo (e.g. *TnT*, 32, cf. *Metamorphoses* III.8; *TnT*, 34, cf. *Metamorphoses*, III.10).

Table 10: Comparison of names used for Apollo in *Thebaid* book I and *TnT*, 1-590

Thebaid	**Name**	***TnT***	**Name**
Cf. I.395	Name inferred	339	'Apaill'
I.395	'Phoebus'	340	'Appaill'
I.495	'Apollo'	451	'Apaill'
I.553	'Phoebum'	Cf. 483-88	Not translated
I.553	'Phoebum'	Cf. 483-88	Not translated
I.558	'Phoebi'	Cf. 489-90	Not translated
I.563	'deus'	497	'Apaill'
Cf. I.569-71	Name inferred	502	'Apaill'
I.574	'Phoebo'	505	'Apaill'
I.575	'deum'	506	'Apaill'
I.627	'Delius'	542	'Apaill'
I.629	'crudelis'	543	'Apaill'
Cf. I.634-35	Apollo not referenced	546	'Apaill'
I.636	'Paean'	547	'Apaill'
I.636-37	See 'Paean' above	548	'Apaill'
I.643	'Thymbraee'	550	'hApaill'
I.646	'Phoebe'	Cf. 550-52	Not translated
I.665	'Phoebi'	Cf. 550-52	Not translated
I.667	'Phoebea'	554	'Apoill'

the explanation on *Thebaid*, IV.157, which gives 'PAEANA proprie paean Apollini canitur' ('specifically, the Paean was sung to Apollo') (*ISTC*, IV.401–02). As well as standardizing the names of deities, the Irish author sometimes explains their role too. For instance, Apollo appears with an explanation that he is 'dea na faistine' ('the god of prophecy') (*TnT*, 2896, cf. *Thebaid*, VII.737 and *TnT*, 3715, cf. *Thebaid*, IX.650).[563]

On occasions when Statius did not name Apollo, presumably because he expected the reader to understand the god as the subject of a sentence (cf. *Thebaid*, I.395 and I.569–71), the translator often clarified the reference by including the name. By comparing Adrastus's narration on the rites of Apollo and the killing of Python at *Thebaid*, I.557–71 to *TnT*, 488–

[563] The first reference to Apollo at *TnT*, 32 also provides this explanation.

504, it is possible to see how the Irish author employed his naming strategy to aid his interpretation of Statius's verse and develop a simpler narrative. As Adrastus tells the tale of Apollo killing Python in Statius's epic, the god is referred to in the nominative *deus* at I.563 and further references to the god in the passage below rely on this reference:

> 'postquam caerulei sinuosa volumina monstri,
> terrigenam Pythona, deus, septem orbibus atris
> amplexum Delphos squamisque annosa terentem
> robora, Castaliis dum fontibus ore trisulco
> fusus hiat nigro sitiens alimenta veneno,
> perculit, absumptis numerosa in vulnera telis,
> Cirrhaeique dedit centum per iugera campi
> vix tandem explicitum, nova deinde piacula caedis
> perquirens nostri tecta haud opulenta Crotopi
> attigit.' (*Thebaid*, I.562–71)
>
> 'The god had struck down earthborn Python, dark monster of the winding coils, embracing Delphi with his seven black circlets and grinding ancient oaks with his scales, even as he sprawled by the Castalian spring and opened his triple-cleft mouth in thirst of nourishment for his black venom. Many the wounds on which the god spent his darts, till finally he left the creature outspread over a hundred acres of Cirrha's plain. Then, seeking to expiate the recent slaying, he came to the modest dwelling of our Crotopus.'

In contrast, in the medieval Irish text Adrastus directly names Apollo thrice:

> '.i. nathair suaichnid secht-fhillti granda gnuisgarb gaisidech eitech luaimneach lan-neimnech darsa comainm Fitoin robai ac indriud insi delbda Deil. Et o'tchualaig Apaill innihi sin, tanic do chathugud risin nathraig, ar ua leis-[s]ium fein int inad coem coiserctha sin, 7 rothoitestar in nathair sin re hApaill amlaid sin o chreachtaib dearmara diarmide con-tacmaiged 7 con-timchilled cet laa air in nathair sin ar maigshlebib Sirra. Et asa haithle sin tanic Apaill remi co tigib saidbri suaichinti soneamla co hairdrig na nGrec .i. co Crothtopus.' (*TnT*, 494–503)
>
> '[T]hat is, a well-known serpent, seven-coiled, horrible, rough-faced, bristly, winged, volatile, full-venomous, named Python, was devastating the shapely island of Delos. And when Apollo heard that, he came to fight with the serpent, for that lovely consecrated place was his own; and that serpent fell by Apollo in that way because of very great innumerable wounds when he encompassed and surrounded that serpent for a hundred days on the sloping plains of Cirrha. And after that Apollo came onward to the rich well-known excellent houses, to the high-king of the Greeks, that is, to Crotopus.'

'Apaill' at *TnT*, 497 corresponds with the poet's use of *deus* at *Thebaid*, I.563. This was a necessary elucidation when one considers that in the vernacular narrative Adrastus does not specify whose sacrifices he is referring to at *TnT*, 489–90. Apollo's attack on Python is

depicted in the *Thebaid* as, 'absumptis numerosa in vulnera telis' ('Many the wounds on which he spent his darts') (I.567). In contrast, the Irish narrative explains, '7 rothoitestar in nathair sin re hApaill amlaid sin o chreachtaib dearmara diarmide con-tacmaiged 7 con-timchilled cet laa air in nathair sin ar maigshlebib Sirra.' ('and that serpent fell by Apollo in that way because of very great innumerable wounds when he encompassed and surrounded that serpent for a hundred days on the sloping plains of Cirrha') (*TnT,* 499–501). While Statius expected his readers to have in mind the nominative *deus* at I.563 to understand the god as the subject of the verb *absumere* ('to spend'), the Irish author simplified his narrative by adding in Apollo's name.[564] The same methodology is utilised at *TnT,* 502 where the translator specified 'tanic Apaill remi co' ('Apollo came onward to'), rather than simply *tanic* ('he came to') for the Latin *attigit*. Thus, the deployment of names in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* can be seen to have a very practical interpretative purpose.

The names of other deities are also standardized by the Irish author. Statius described the Theban festival celebrating the birth of 'Euhie' ('Euhius') at *Thebaid,* II.72. The Irish narrative subsequently depicts sacrifices being dedicated 'do Baith, do dei inn fhina' ('to Bacchus, to the god of wine') (*TnT,* 618). A reference to Bacchus as 'Liber' at *Thebaid,* IV.653 also became 'Baich, [...] dei inn fhina' at *TnT,* 1716–17. When Bacchus appears to Hypsipyle and Thoas at *Thebaid,* V.265 Statius used the epithet *Thoyneus*; however, he is simply referred to as 'Baich' ('Bacchus') in the corresponding Middle Irish narrative (*TnT,* 1913). Again, it seems likely that the translator relied on Lactantius's commentary to understand who Statius meant: 'sic Thyoneus, quomodo "Semeleius". Liberi enim patris mater Thyone dicta est, quae et Semele appellatur.' ('Thus, Thyoneus, just as "of Semele". For the mother of Father Liber was called Thyone, who is also called Semele') (*ISTC,* V.611–13). A later reference at *Thebaid,* VIII.492 describes the character Polites as keeping his hair for Iacchus (another name for Bacchus). In the Irish narrative this reference was clarified and expanded and describes Polites as 'sarcart do Baich .i. dea inn fhina' ('priest to Bacchus, that is, the god of wine') at *TnT,* 3164–65.

Where Statius called Minerva *Pallas* in the *Thebaid,* she is always *Menerba* in the Middle Irish narrative and she often appears with the title *bandei in gaiscib* ('goddess of arms') (e.g. *TnT,* 3171, cf. *Thebaid,* VIII.500 and *TnT,* 3289, cf. *Thebaid,* VIII.713).[565] The poet's

[564] Shackleton Bailey's modern English translation of the *Thebaid* also clarifies that the verb relates to the god, 'Many the wounds on which the god spent his darts' (*Thebaid,* I.567); an act which demonstrates that Statius's numerous clauses continue to present a challenge to his readers.
[565] Calder translates *gaiscid* as 'valour', I suggest 'arms', *eDIL* s.v. *gaisced* (b). This attribute appears to be supported by Minerva's role in the narrative, for instance, at *TnT,* 1204 where she provides Perseus with a crystal shield to help him kill the Gorgon (see **Chapter 4:4.3**) and *TnT,* 3289 where she assists Tydeus in warding off the enemy's weapons.

reference to Minerva as 'Tritonia' at *Thebaid,* VIII.758–59 was rendered 'Menerba .i. bandei in gaiscid, o Ioib, mac Saduirn' ('Minerva, that is, goddess of arms, from Jupiter, son of Saturn') (*TnT,* 3326–27). Venus's name is often accompanied by the title *bandei na toili* ('goddess of love') in the Irish vernacular (e.g. *TnT,* 1840, cf. *Thebaid,* V.58). Statius used a variety of names for the god Mars, such as *Gradivus*, *Bellipotens*, and *Mars*; yet the god is always *Mairt* in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and frequently appears with the title *dei in chatha* ('god of war') (e.g. *TnT,* 1877, cf. *Thebaid,* V.155 and *TnT,* 3053, cf. *Thebaid,* VIII.384). Jupiter is referred to as *Iuppiter* (genitive *Iovis*) which is often standardized to *Ioib* or *Ioib mac Saduirn* in the Middle Irish text.[566] Statius occasionally referred to Jupiter with the epithet *Tonans* ('Thunderer'), which was rendered in the corresponding Irish narrative as 'Ioib' ('Jupiter') at *TnT,* 2067 (cf. *Thebaid,* V.511) and as 'Ioib mac Shaduirn' ('Jupiter, son of Saturn') at *TnT,* 4293–94 (cf. *Thebaid,* XI.11).

In *Imtheachta Aeniasa* the names of deities are also standardised. For instance, in Aeneas's account of the fall of Troy in *Aeneid* Book II, he refers to Minerva by the names *Pallas* (II. 163, and *Palladium* referring to her statue at II.166 and II.183), *Tritonia* (II.171 and 226), and *Minerva* (II.404). In *Imtheachta Aeniasa,* however, she is always *Menerba* (470, 478, 495, 550). Minerva is described as 'bande na nGrec' ('a goddess of the Greeks') at *Imtheachta Aeniasa,* 467, which explains who the *dea* ('goddess') mentioned at *Aeneid,* II.170 is. This is the only time that a specific gloss like this is given to a divinity in *Imtheachta Aeniasa*.

Indeed, the inclusion of titles giving the divine roles of the deities appears to be an approach unique to the translator of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and appears to highlight the translator's exegetical interests. While Statius's varied use of names for deities in the *Thebaid,* which included obscure epithets, often made the identification of deities challenging, the Irish author's standardisation of these in the vernacular narrative demonstrates a desire to ensure that these characters could easily be identified by the reader.

5.3.5 Thebans vs. Greeks

From the very beginning of the Middle Irish *Thebaid,* the war at Thebes is set out as a conflict between Polynices and Eteocles, the brothers who killed one another in the great war 'na

[566] For example, see *TnT,* 575, cf. *Thebaid,* I.197; *TnT,* 838, cf. *Thebaid,* II.438; *TnT,* 1212, cf. *Thebaid,* III.471; *TnT,* 1771, cf. *Thebaid,* IV.769; *TnT,* 2090, cf. *Thebaid,* V.584; *TnT,* 2242, cf. *Thebaid,* VI.198; *TnT,* 2596, cf. *Thebaid,* VII.2; *TnT,* 4254, cf. *Thebaid,* X.897; and *TnT,* 4288, cf. *Thebaid,* XI.6.

Tiabhanta 7 na nGrec' ('of the Thebans and the Greeks') (*TnT*, 6).[567] Jupiter also makes clear that he wants vengeance 'arna Tiauandaib 7 arna Grecaib' ('on the Thebans and the Greeks') at *TnT*, 575–78.[568] The translator of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* frequently altered references to where characters originated from, creating a false dichotomy between the Argives and Thebans as Greeks and non-Greeks. This may reflect a desire on the part of the translator to create continuity between the Irish *Thebaid* and *Togail Troí*. In the latter, the conflict is between Trojans and Greeks.[569] A similar approach can be found in other European adaptations of the classical epics. Writing on the Old French *Roman de Thèbes*, Battles observes that 'One important way that the OF poet modifies the Theban war to resemble that of Troy involves transforming the nature of the conflict from civil war to a war between two foreign powers.'[570] In this section, I consider the exegetical purpose behind the reframing of the conflict in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* as one between Thebans and Greeks.

Although this naming strategy was used by the Irish author throughout the translation, it is particularly noticeable in the battle scenes, where Statius's narrative is particularly dense and allusive. For instance, in the extracts from *Thebaid*, VIII.428–55 below, Statius provided a scene of minor characters fighting in battle. The poet sometimes drew on the geographical regions which individual characters came from or their parentage; however, minor characters are often mentioned only by their forenames and their deaths are described with great brevity. Indeed, Bruce Gibson has noted that Statius '[I]s unwilling to provide very extended accounts of the battle involving minor characters fighting amongst themselves'.[571] In contrast, the Irish author built on Statius's patronymics and geographical epithets and reworked the text to include a note of whether they were Thebans or Greeks.

Principium pugnae turmas Asopius Hypseus | Oebalias (namque hae magnum et gentile tumentes | Euboicum duris rumpunt umbonibus agmen) | reppulit erepto cunei ductore Menalca. (*Thebaid*, VIII.428–31)	Is andsin darala Ipseus mac Asopas do Tiabandaib aigid ind agaid 7 Menalca do Grecaib .i. taisech na nEoballda. Roscail 7 ros-crothastar Ipseus Tiabanda munter Menalca, cur-[fh]acsad a tigerna a oenur i n-eigin irgaili da n-eis. (*TnT*, 3094–97)

[567] Cf. *Thebaid*, I.1–3. See discussion in **Chapter 3:3.1**.
[568] See **Chapter 1:6.2** and **Chapter 6:1.2**.
[569] This dichotomy may also have influenced the development of *Táin Bó Cúailgne* in the Book of Leinster. Poppe and Dagmar Schülter argue that some literati working on the Book of Leinster may have perceived the Trojan war, '[A]s parallel to the alleged political situation in Ireland of the so-called pentarchy of the time around the birth of Christ, in which the province of Ulster (of 'fifth') of Ulster was believed to have been in constant war with the other four provinces of Ireland', see Poppe and Schlüter, 'Greece, Ireland, Ulster and Troy', p. 127. See also Fulton, 'History and Historia', pp. 40–57.
[570] Battles, p. 49.
[571] Bruce Gibson, 'Battle Narrative in Statius's *Thebaid*', in *The Poetry of Statius*, ed. by Johannes J. L. Smolenaars, Harm-Jan van Dam, and Ruurd R. Nauta (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 85–109 (p. 89).

Asopian Hypseus begins the fray, driving back the Oebalian squadrons (for in mighty pride of race they were breaking the Euboean line with their hard bosses) and snatching away Menalcas, the leader of the wedge.	There Hypseus, son of Asopus, a Theban, and Menalcas, a Greek, that is, the chief of Oebalia, met face to face. Theban Hypseus scattered and shook the people of Menalcas so that they left their lord alone behind them in stress of battle.

The Irish narrative clarifies who is fighting who in the scene. Hypseus is identified as a Theban and Menalcas as a Greek, as well as the chief of Oebalia. Statius named Menaclas as 'Lacon' ('a Laconian') at *Thebaid*, VIII.432 which is presumably how the translator identified him as a Greek. Mention of the Eubean line was omitted in the vernacular text, which provides the reader with a clearer picture of the action.[572]

Phaedimon Iasiden arcu Dircaeus Amyntas | destinat: heu celeres Parcae! iam palpitat arvis | Phaedimus, et certi nondum tacet arcus Amyntae. | abstulit ex umero dextram Calydonius Agreus | Phegeos: illa suum terra tenet improba ferrum | et movet; extimuit sparsa inter tela iacentem | praegrediens truncamque tamen percussit Acoetes. (*Thebaid*, VIII.438–44)	Acus asa haithli tarlaic airsid ammaindsech do Thiabandaib .i. Amindtus urchar do saigit do Iasid mac Pedimuis do Grecaib co torchair de. Is andsin rocomraic coraid do Cailidondaib .i. Agreius re trenfher do Tiabandaib .i. Pegeius, 7 robui cach dibh a[c] comairlech aroli, co tuc Agreius builli do Peig, co roben a laim ṅdes on gualaind de, 7 co rothoit lam in laich sin. Robui ac siubal 7 ac lemnig ar lar 7 a claideb comnert inti. Et o 'tchondairc Acetes do Grecaib sin, tanic 7 rotrenbuail in laim ar lar, co rus-crechtnaig co mor. (*TnT*, 3102–10)
Dircaean Amyntas aims his bow at Phaedimus, Iasus' son. Ah swift Parcae! Already Phaedimus palpitates on the ground and sure Amyntas' bow is not yet silent. Calydonian Agreus severed Phegeus' right arm from his shoulder. On the ground it held its sword relentlessly and moved it. Acoetes, passing in front of it as it lay, feared and struck, amputated though it was.	And afterwards a prudent Theban champion, that is, Amyntas, let fly an arrow cast at Iasus son of Phaedimus, a Greek, so that he fell by it. There fought a warrior of Calydon, that is, Agreus, with a Theban strong man, that is, Phegeus, and each of them was mutually hacking at the other, until Agreus dealt Phegeus a blow, so that he cut off his right arm from his shoulder, and so that hero's arm fell. It continued moving and leaping on the ground [with] his very strong sword in its [grasp]. And when Acoetes, a Greek, saw that, he came and dealt the arm a mighty blow on the ground, so that wounded it greatly.

Statius identified Amyntas as *Dircaeus* ('Dircaean') (VIII.438), an adjective which links him to Dirce, near Thebes.[573] In developing the Middle Irish narrative, the warrior is described only

[572] Notably, Menalcas's death is marked with a cross in the manuscript Adv.MS.72.1.8, fol. 20^{r} a12. See **Chapter 2:2.1** and **Table 1**.
[573] Statius refers to the place at *Thebaid*, II.322.

as a Theban (*TnT*, 3103). Statius named Amyntas's opponent in battle as 'Phaedimon Iasiden' ('Phaedimus, Iasus's son') (VIII.438). The Irish author misinterpreted which of the latter names was a patronymic and provided 'Iasid mac Pedimuis' ('Iasus son of Phaedimus') (*TnT*, 3103) before adding that he was 'do Grecaib' ('of the Greeks) (*TnT*, 3104). This mistake appears to be a curious one given that Statius depicted Phaedimus palpitating on the ground at *Thebaid*, VIII.440.[574] Yet, the translator's confusion here may offer the modern scholar some insight into why he felt the need to simplify scenes like these, as this error can be seen to indicate the translator's difficulty in understanding who was who in these dense battle scenes from the *Thebaid*. The omission of Statius's brief narratorial apostrophe to the Fates, 'heu celeres Parcae!' ('Ah swift Parcae') from *Thebaid*, VIII.439, which appears to reflect on how quick they are to cut the thread of the warrior's life, also seems to indicate the translator's desire to simplify the narrative.

The poet's reference to 'Calydonius Agreus' (*Thebaid*, VIII.441) was retained in the vernacular as 'coraid do Cailidondaib .i. Agreius' ('a warrior of Calydon, that is, Agreus') (*TnT*, 3104–05). It seems probable that the translator did not feel he needed to specify that the Calydonian warrior was Greek, because he felt confident that his readers would understand Agreus's affiliation with Tydeus, whose association with Calydon he constantly highlights in the narrative (see above **Chapter 5:2.3**). Agreus's opponent Phegeus is subsequently identified as a Theban at *TnT*, 3105 (cf. *Thebaid*, VIII.442). Acoetes, who attempts to quash Phegeus's arm, which continues to move even after it has been cut off, is also named as a Greek at *TnT*, 3109 (cf. *Thebaid*, VIII.444).

The Irish author continued to expand upon Statius's references to warriors in battle as he translated the epic action. However, it appears that identifying who was who became more difficult as he encountered increasingly name-laden and allusive sentences:

Iphin atrox Acamas, Argum ferus impulit Hypseus, | stravit Abanta Pheres, diversaque vulnera flentes | Iphis eques, pedes Argus, Abas auriga iacebant. (*Thebaid*, VIII.445–47)	Rocomraic andsin Ipis do Thiabandaib re hAccamas n-anacarach do Grecaib, 7 rothoit in Tiauanda do gonaib in Grecda sin. Rocomraic dono arís do Ipseus mac Asopuis 7 do Arcus engnumach do Grecaib. Rogargaigsead a ngliaid, 7 rocruadaigsed a comlond, 7 rothoit Argus Grecda, ger-u airsid, don irgail sin. (*TnT*, 3110–15)
Savage Acamas overthrew Iphis, fierce Hypseus Argus, Pheres laid Abas low. Weeping different wounds they lay—Iphis	Then Iphis, a Theban, encountered ruthless Acamas, a Greek, and the Theban fell by the wounds of that Greek. Then, afterwards Hypseus son of Asopus encountered

[574] A minor character, Phaedimus also appears at *TnT*, 2428 (cf. *Thebaid*, VI.558) and *TnT*, 2447 (*Thebaid*, VI.606).

the horseman, Argus the footsoldier, Abas the charioteer.	dexterous Argus, a Greek. They intensified their fight and hardened their combat, and Greek Argus fell, champion though he was, in that strife.

The translation continues to be explanatory in style. Iphis is identified as a Theban (*TnT*, 3111) and his killer, Acamas, a Greek (*TnT*, 3112). Hypseus is recalled as 'mac Asopuis' ('son of Asopus') (*TnT*, 3113) from his earlier appearance at *TnT*, 3094 (cf. *Thebaid*, VIII.428), a patronymic which is absent from the corresponding text at *Thebaid*, VIII.445. As the Irish author had already identified Hypseus as a Theban from *TnT*, 3094, he did not include this information again at *TnT*, 3113. Hypseus's opponent Argus is recognized as a Greek (*TnT*, 3113, cf. *Thebaid*, VIII.445). The translator expanded the imagery of Argus's death and provided a short description of the warriors' combat at *TnT*, 3114–15. This elaborates on Statius's verse which only briefly mentions the deaths of Iphis, Argus, and Abas at *Thebaid*, VIII.446–47.

In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, there follow two encounters at lines 3115–19. The first is between Hypseus and a Greek named Tiphys and the second between Hypseus and Tiphys's charioteer, Abas:

> Et arna thoitim sin les, darala in trenfher Tiphis do Grecaib chuici, 7 se bar eoch, 7 rochuirset comlond, 7 tanic andsin a ara i fiadnaisi Thiphis .i. Abas, 7 rogon co hamnas Ipceus. Ipceus, immorro, trascrais, trenmarbais na firu sin, co torchradar les. (*TnT*, 3115–19)
>
> And because of the fall of that man by [Hypseus], the warrior Tiphys, from the Greeks, met with him on his horse and they joined battle, and then came [Tiphys's] charioteer into the presence of Tiphys, that is, Abas, and wounded Hypseus with severity. Hypseus, however, overthrew and strongly killed those men, so that they fell by him.

Calder took *Tiphis* at *TnT*, 3116 and 3117 to be the same character as *Ipis* ('Iphis') at *TnT*, 3111; an editorial decision which does not reflect the names in the Irish narrative. As the spelling of the name is not the same and as Iphis is (correctly) described as having fallen by Acamas at *TnT*, 3112, it appears that the translator creatively reworked this passage to include a character named Tiphys for Hypseus to meet in combat.[575] Abas, the charioteer (*auriga*, *Thebaid*, VIII.447), who Statius describes as being killed by Pheres at *Thebaid*, VIII. 446, is designated as charioteer for Tiphys in the Middle Irish narrative (*TnT*, 3118). Abas joins Tiphys in combat against Hypseus and succeeds in wounding him severely. Hypseus then slays

[575] Note that the spelling of Hypseus changes in the Irish text. At *TnT*, 3094, 3096, 3098, 3101, and 3113 *Ipseus* is given, however, at *TnT*, 3118 the name is spelt *Ipceus*.

them both. Although Pheres was omitted from the Irish translation of these lines his character was reused in one of the following passages (see below).

In the *Thebaid*, the action moves on swiftly from the deaths of Iphis, Argus, and Abas to describe Inachian twins killing Cadmian twins (*Thebaid*, VIII.448–52). The Inachians (i.e. Argives) do not see that their opponents are also twins while they are fighting, and it is only when they go to strip the bodies that they see that they have killed Cadmian twins (i.e. Thebans). Statius's epic battle narrative then moves on again to a fight between Ion and Daphaneus (*Thebaid*, VIII.453–54). Statius tells the reader that Ion is a worshipper at Pisa and Daphaneus at Cirrha; details which are then needed to interpret the following references to Jupiter and Apollo and to work out which of the warriors dies.[576]

Inachidae gemini geminos e sanguine Cadmi | occultos galeis (saeva ignorantia belli) | perculerant ferro; sed dum spolia omnia caesis | eripiunt, videre nefas, et maestus uterque | respicit ad fratrem pariterque errasse queruntur. | cultor Ion Pisae cultorem Daphnea Cirrhae | turbatis prostravit equis: hunc laudat ab alto | Iuppiter, hunc tardus frustra miseratur Apollo. (*Thebaid*, VIII.448–55)	Is andsin tarla comrac cethrair ar lar in chatha .i. dias brathar do Tiabandaib .i. Ión 7 Dapnis, 7 dias brathar do Grecaib .i. Fares 7 Abás, 7 roba chomlund bagach braithremail sin do leith dar leth, cein cor–thuitsead in dias Tiabanda sin risin dis do Grecaib. Et o rotuitsead leo, tucsad aichni cor brathir iad ar comdichracht a comraic 7 ar cosmaileacht a ndelba, 7 tanic a n-aicned co mor forro, 7 ba truag leo a toitim dia lamaib.[577] (*TnT*, 3119–26)
Inachian twins had struck down twins of Cadmus' blood hidden by their helmets (cruel ignorance of war!); but as they strip the slain of all their spoils, they see the horror; each looks at his brother in dismay and together they lament their error. Ion, worshipper at Pisa, brings down Daphneus, worshipper at Cirrha, and throws his horses into confusion. Jupiter from on high praises the one, Apollo, slow to aid, vainly pities the other.	Then happened in the middle of the battle a combat of four, that is, two Theban brothers, that is, Ion and Daphnis, and two Greek brothers, that is, Pheres and Abas, and that was a warlike brotherly encounter of side against side, until those two Thebans fell by the two Greeks. And when they had fallen by them, they recognised that they were brothers by the keenness of their combat and the likeness of their forms, and their feelings overcame them greatly, and they were sorry that [the Thebans] had fallen by their hands.

Statius described 'Inachidae gemini' ('Inachian twins') striking down 'geminos e sanguine Cadmi' ('twins of Cadmus' blood') at *Thebaid*, VIII.447. This reference does not appear to connect with either the warriors in the preceding lines or those which follow.[578] The Irish

[576] As Augoustakis notes, 'On Pisa, the district of Ellis around Olympia, cf. 4.238; Cirrha, the port of Delphi, and by extension Delphi enjoys a special connection with Apollo, often called *Cirrhaeus* (*Cirrhae pater*, 7.779)', see Augoustakis, *Statius, Thebaid 8*, p. 237.
[577] I have changed Calder's translation of *TnT*, 3124–26 to better reflect the Irish text as he included references to the Greeks and Thebans without making it clear that they were additions on his part.
[578] In including these characters, Statius drew on models from Homer and Virgil where twins kill twins during battle in battle. See Augoustakis, *Statius, Thebaid 8*, pp. 236–37 and John Henderson,

author remoulded this passage to explain who these twins are and to name them. Consequently, Ion and Daphneus, opponents in Statius's *Thebaid* and unconnected to either set of twins, became Theban brothers in the Irish vernacular. Having altered the role of Ion and Daphneus, the Irish author understandably chose to omit the reference to Jupiter and Apollo from *Thebaid*, VIII.454–55. The other set of brothers are also an unlikely pair: Pheres, responsible for Abas's death at *Thebaid*, VIII.446 was transformed into his brother at *TnT*, 3121.

The poet drew pathos from his description of these Theban and Greek twins dying in battle, commenting on the horror that the men experience when they realise what has happened (*Thebaid*, VIII.449–52). While the Irish author could easily have chosen to leave out this difficult passage from the translation, instead he developed a stronger context for this pathetic imagery by naming the two sets of twins. Further detail is provided in the vernacular narrative to explain how the Greek twins recognised that they had killed Theban twins. This focuses on their conduct in battle (*TnT*, 3124–25) and 'cosmaileacht a ndelba' ('the likeness of their forms') (*TnT*, 3125). The Irish author even chose to break away from his usually objective style by including the regret of the Greek twins over the killing (*TnT*, 3125–26). By drawing out Statius's subjective observation here, the Middle Irish *Thebaid* leaves the reader with a stark image of brothers at war.

There is considerable emphasis on naming the warriors in battle and knowing who the dead are in the scenes from the Middle Irish *Thebaid* above. The translator engaged creatively with Statius's epic to develop a battle narrative where it was possible to closely follow whether the warriors killing, or being killed, were Theban or Greek. At times, this naming strategy appears to have been prioritised over translating the episodes in battle as Statius provided them. The result is a hybrid narrative in which the poet's imagery can be traced yet has been reimagined overall.

5.4 Conclusion

To conclude, *materia* from the *Thebaid* was consistently reworked as it was rendered into the Middle Irish narrative on both a macro and micro level. The Irish author appears to have consistently removed or reworked Statius's narratorial apostrophes. Where apostrophes were revised, the *materia* which was transferred into the translation narrative was limited to essential plot information. The poet's moralizing passages tend to be omitted entirely. The use

'Statius' *Thebaid*: form (p)re-made', in *Roman Epic*, ed. by Anthony J. Boyle (London; New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 162–91 (repr. in John Henderson, *Fighting for Rome: Poets and Caesars, History and Civil War* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), pp. 230–33).

of paraphrase to reconstruct character's speeches from the *Thebaid* not only shortened the Middle Irish narrative, it could also be used to alter the reader's understanding of the action, as is the case with speeches by Jupiter and Orcus discussed above. Indeed, the translator frequently creatively recomposed passages from the *Thebaid*, an approach which may demonstrate the need to rework key concepts to render the tale accessible to his contemporary audience. While the vernacular prose is more objective in tone, it is not without elements of pathos, as the telling of the death of Opheltes demonstrates.

Naming strategies in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* appear to further demonstrate the translator's practical approach to interpreting Statius's epic for his contemporary audience. Statius's obscure Greek patronymics were rendered into Irish forms; geographical epithets were elucidated; the varied naming strategies employed by the poet were often standardized. The Irish author appears to have been conscious of his exegetical engagement with the text; often using an *id est* when providing additional names or patronymics. Overall, these strategies reveal a highly interpretative translation style which recalls the principles of *enarratio*.

Chapter Six

Translating similes, developing similes

6.1 Introduction

William J. Dominik writes of Statius's similes that 'Statius' use of similes in the *Thebaid* forms an important part of his poetic program and is closely related to the major themes of the epic.'[579] Karla Pollmann too highlights the importance of Statius's implementation of similes in the *Thebaid*, observing,

> It is characteristic of Statius' technique of arranging similes that they are not just an illustration of the ongoing action; his similes form more of a comment on the narrated action and implicitly indicate the outcome of the action to which they are related.[580]

Statius's use of similes was prolific and, as Dominik and Pollmann both observe, it was an important aspect of his poetic technique. Dominik notes that despite attempts by critics to record the number of similes which appear in the *Thebaid* the figure has varied between 179 and 210.[581] He sensibly suggests this problem is partly due to 'different interpretations of what constitutes a simile'.[582] Dominik sets out his definition of a simile as follows:

> [A] simile is understood to refer to a situation where the poet is explicitly comparing people, objects, or actions in the narrative with persons, things, or actions not strictly part of the narrative. In this sense the word "comparison" is perhaps better than "simile", though all comparisons are marked by a specific marker or signifier such as *qualis, ut, uelut, sic*; an adjective in the comparative degree; or other words suggesting that a comparison with objects or people outside the narrative is to follow (e.g. *putes, non aliter*).[583]

[579] William J. Dominik, 'Similes and Their Programmatic Role in the *Thebaid*', in *Brill's Companion to Statius*, ed. by Dominik, Newlands, and Gervais, pp. 266–90 (p. 266).
[580] Karla Pollmann, 'Statius's *Thebaid* and the Legacy of Vergil's *Aeneid*', *Mnemosyne*, 54 (2001), 10–30 (p. 21).
[581] For an overview see Dominik, 'Similes', p. 267 n. 9.
[582] Dominik, 'Similes', p. 267.
[583] Dominik, 'Similes', p. 267.

Table 11: Comparison of similes between the *Thebaid* and the Middle Irish *Thebaid*

Thebaid													
	I	**II**	**III**	**IV**	**V**	**VI**	**VII**	**VIII**	**IX**	**X**	**XI**	**XII**	**Totals**
No. of Similes	11	15	14	16	20	38	18	23	21	24	23	21	**244**
Middle Irish *Thebaid*													
Total no. similes translated from the *Thebaid*	7	9	5	10	8	9	4	6	10	7	3	1	**79**
Types of approaches to translating Statian similes in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*													
Similes corresponding to lacunae in Adv.MS.72.1.8	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**7**
Not translated	4	5	3	6	12	29	14	17	11	17	20	20	**158**
Close translation	3	2	3	7	8	6	1	5	4	4	1	0	**44**
Close translation with scholium	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**5**
Descriptive interpretation	1	5	1	3	0	1	2	1	3	3	0	0	**20**
Descriptive interpretation with scholium	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Replacement Irish simile	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	2	1	**8**
Replacement Irish metaphor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
Additional similes in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*													
Based on the *Thebaid* text	3	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	3	0	1	0	**13**
Not based on the *Thebaid* text	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**

Based on this classification he finds 237 similes in the *Thebaid*.[584] In this study I have followed Dominik's definition and analysis of similes in the *Thebaid*; however, my own research produced a slightly higher count of 244.[585]

Table 11 highlights that 79 of Statius's similes were translated in some form in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. The process of translation does not appear to have been straightforward or consistent and a range of different approaches can be found in the narrative. The Irish author's primary response to Statius's similes was not to translate them; an approach which accounts for 158 similes which do not appear in the vernacular narrative. The loss of an additional seven similes corresponds with lacunae in the manuscript Adv.MS.72.1.8.[586] These absences make it impossible to judge whether the medieval Irish author did include them in the original translation. There are 49 instances where the original comparison from a Statian simile was retained in some form. In this study, these examples are referred to as close translations. Of the close translations identified, 5 include scholia. There are 21 examples where Statius's simile was replaced by a description, which I refer to as descriptive interpretation. There is one example of descriptive interpretation which also includes scholia. This is the example of male friendships at *TnT*, 440–43 (cf. *Thebaid*, I.474–77, which is discussed in **Chapter 4:3.1**). I refer to the translator's method of using a new Irish simile to supersede a Statian one as a replacement Irish simile. There are 8 of these, usually with some foundation in the original Latin text. There is one example where a Statian simile was replaced with a metaphor based on the original comparison from the Latin text.[587] In addition to the similes translated from Statius's *Thebaid*, there are also 13 instances where the Irish author incorporated a new simile in the vernacular text as an interpretation of Statius's descriptive narrative.[588] There is also one new simile in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* with no basis in a simile or descriptive narrative from the epic (*TnT*, 2807–11).

In this chapter, the wide range of techniques used to translate Statius's epic similes in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* is investigated. What might the translator's aims have been in adapting Statius's similes for his contemporary audience? Does the Irish translator retain any of Statius's subjective style in translating the similes? This chapter also explores the creativity

[584] Dominik, 'Similes', p. 268 and Appendix A, pp. 286–90.
[585] See **Table 11** and **Appendix II**. My additions to Dominik's list of similes are *Thebaid*, III.530, V.5–6, VI.522, VI.602, VI.750, VIII.71–72 and XI.529–30.
[586] The lacunae in Middle Irish *Thebaid* text in Adv.MS.72.1.8 correspond to the loss of the following similes from the *Thebaid*: II.323–30, III.22–32, III.45–52, III.56–57, III.140–46, III.253–54, III.255–59.
[587] *TnT*, 3658–59, cf. *Thebaid*, IX.532–36. Myrick draws attention to textual correspondences in metaphors describing heroes the Irish saga narratives and *Togail Troí*, see Myrick, pp. 149–50.
[588] For an alternative view of the development of new similes in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, see Harris, pp. 59–65.

of the Irish author in developing new similes in the vernacular narrative where Statius had only descriptive narrative. What influence, if any, did native literary narratives have on the translation or development of similes in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*? Are there any textual correspondences to other medieval Irish narratives? If so, how does the Irish author's approach to Statius's similes reflect a wider engagement with native narratives and other classical narratives translated and adapted in medieval Ireland.

6.2 Close translation

6.2.1 Dymas and the lioness, *Thebaid*, X.414–19, cf. *TnT*, 4017–19

At *Thebaid*, X.347–448 Statius includes an episode which focuses on the deaths of the Argive heroes Hopleus and Dymas as they attempt to rescue the corpses of Tydeus and Parthenopaeus.[589] When Hopleus is killed by a Theban patrol (X.394–404) the poet depicts Dymas as he hesitates in attacking the Thebans who have surrounded him (X.405–13). Pollmann notes that this hesitation reflects Dymas's uncertainty over the action he should take, 'whether he should abandon his master's body and beg for his own life or whether he should defend both himself and his master's corpse (10.409 *miserabile corpus*) with his weapons'.[590] Dymas choses the latter option and, in doing so, is compared to a lioness protecting her cubs.[591] Statius appears to have modelled his simile on *Iliad*, XVII.133–36, which compares Ajax's defense of Patroclus's body to a lion protecting its cubs when hunters come upon them in a forest.[592]

ut lea, quam saevo fetam pressere cubili | venantes Numidae, natos erecta superstat, | mente sub incerta torvum ac miserabile frendens; | illa quidem turbare globos et frangere morsu | tela queat, sed prolis amor crudelia vincit | pectora, et a media catulos circumspicit ira. (*Thebaid*, X.414–19)	[A]mal leoman lanfhergach risna gabaid gaisgedaig arna chrad 'ma chuilenaib, conid cuma leis bas 7 betha d' fagbail.[593] (*TnT*, 4017–19)
So a lioness that has newly whelped, beset by Numidian hunters in her cruel den, stands	[L]ike a full-angry lion which warriors do not tackle after its anguish about its cubs,

[589] The poet himself makes it clear that his model for this section is Virgil's Nisus and Euryalus from *Aeneid* Book IX (cf. *Thebaid* X.445–48). On the intertextuality of the episode, see Pollmann, 10–30 and Donka D. Markus, 'Transfiguring Heroism: Nisus and Euryalus in Statius' *Thebaid*', *Vergilius*, 43 (1997), 56–62. See also **Chapter 4: 3.1**.
[590] Pollmann, p. 20.
[591] Once Dymas is wounded at *Thebaid* X. 422 and the Thebans drag away Parthenopaeus's body, he does resort to supplication (X.423–30), but cannot agree to Amphion's treacherous terms (X.431–34).
[592] Pollmann, p. 21.
[593] Calder translates the second part of the sentence as 'it is indifferent whether to live or to die'.

upright over her young, gnashing her teeth in grim and piteous wise, her mind in doubt; she could disrupt the groups and break their weapons with her bite, but love for her offspring binds her cruel heart and from the midst of her fury she looks round at her cubs.	so that death and leaving life do not matter to it.

Pollmann highlights that through the simile, 'Statius indirectly points out that in the same way as the lioness with her decision risks her life and will presumably die, Dymas' decision will lead to a lethal end for himself as well'.[594] Thus, the lioness simile is an excellent example of Statius's subjective style, as the poet has effectively informed his readers to prepare for Dymas's death.

In the Irish version, the simile is condensed, removing some of the key imagery from the Latin. This includes the description of hunters intruding on the lioness's cruel den (*saevo cubili, Thebaid,* X.414) and the way that the lioness's concern over her cubs conflicts with her desire attack the hunters, 'sed prolis amor crudelia vincit' ('love for her offspring binds her cruel heart') (*Thebaid,* X.418–19). In the Irish simile the hunters (*venantes, Thebaid,* X.415) have become *gaiscedach* ('warriors') (*TnT,* 4018) who hold off attacking an angry lion, in anguish over its cubs. The lion in the Irish text appears to have absorbed Dymas's fearless attitude from the lines which precede the Statian simile, where he is said to be: 'inque omnia tela | versus et ad caedem iuxta mortemque paratus' ('facing all weapons and ready alike to die and to kill') (*Thebaid,* X.412–13). Thus, in the Irish translation, it is said of the lion 'that death and leaving life do not matter to it' ('cuma leis bas 7 betha d' fagbail') (*TnT,* 4019). While Statius's simile appears to draw the reader's attention to Dymas's vulnerability it seems that the Irish author was concerned to bolster Dymas's warrior prowess. The Irish simile leaves Dymas's fate uncertain, and is, consequently, more objective than Statius's original.

Although Dymas is ready to fight, the imagery of the lioness looking around for her cubs at *Thebaid,* X.419 implies that he is distracted by his concern for Parthenopaeus's dead body. When Dymas's left hand is cut off the reader may infer that it was because his attention was diverted from the Thebans' attack by the corpse (*Thebaid,* X.420–21). Statius does not identify the perpetrator, but notes 'saevire vetaret Amphion' ('Amphion forbade cruelty') (*Thebaid,* X.420–21). The Irish translator used this reference to Amphion to recast the scene with Dymas and Amphion as they encounter 're hag 7 re hirgail' ('in battle and strife') (*TnT,* 4020) and, in contrast to the anonymous attack in Statius's epic, to create a focused scene of one-to-one combat. It is through this encounter in the Irish narrative that Dymas is first wounded and loses Parthenopaeus's body to the Thebans,

[594] Pollmann, p. 20.

> [T]ug Ampion andsin beim claidim do Dimas, cor-ben a lam clí[595] comnairt 'ga gualaind de, 7 rothairrngedar na Tiabanda corp Partanopeuis uadh. (*TnT*, 4020–23)
>
> [T]hen Amphion dealt Dymas a sword-blow, and struck off his powerful left arm at the shoulder, and the Thebans dragged the body of Parthenopaeus from him.

The reworked narrative explains who cut off Dymas's hand and the translator may have partly designed this scene as a solution to this mystery. The opportunity for combat has a wider effect, however, as through Dymas's fight with Amphion, the Irish author makes him appear less vulnerable than he does in the *Thebaid* and, consequently, his death is less pathetic.

In the second recension of *Togail Troí* (hereafter *TTH*) there is a lion simile which corresponds closely to the one from *TnT*, 4017–19.[596] The simile in *TTH* is coupled with that of a furious bull to depict Achilles as he goes into single combat against the Mysian king, Teuthras:

> Tanic íarsin fó ṡlúag na Moesiánda amal leoman londcrechtaig íarna thocrád fo chuilenaib, no amal tarb ndasachtach día tabar drochbéim. (*TTH*, 727–29)
>
> Then [Achilles] came through the host of the Mysians like a fiercely-wounding lion worried on account of its cubs, or like a furious bull to which an evil blow is given.

The scene of combat between Achilles and Teuthras here is an expansion on the text from pseudo-Dares' *De Excidio Troiae Historia* where it is said,

> Teuthras cum exercitu superveniunt. quem Achilles fugato exercitu vulnerat: quem iacentem Telephus clipeo protexit, ne ab Achille interficeretur. (*De Excidio Troiae Historia*, XVI.2–4)[597]
>
> Teuthras arrived with his army. Thereupon Achilles put the enemy to flight, and wounded [Teuthras]. Telephus protected [Teuthras] by casting him under his shield, so that he would not be killed by Achilles.

The development of theses similes in *TTH* is part of a wider description of Achilles' warrior prowess (*TTH*, 724–27).[598]

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[595] Calder mistakenly translated 'a lam clí' (*TnT*, 4021) as 'his right arm', see *eDIL* s.v. *clé* (a) 'left'. The use of *lám* for 'arm' is attested under *eDIL* s.v. *lám* (b) and appears to be correct in the context.
[596] All citations for *TTH* are taken from, 'The Destruction of Troy, aus H.2.17', ed. and trans. by Whitley Stokes, in *Irische Texte: mit Übersetzungen und Worterbuch*, ed. by Stokes and Windisch (1884), pp. 1-142.
[597] See Dares, *De Excidio Troiae Historia*, p. 21. The English translation is my own.
[598] A discussion of the development of this passage in *Togail Troí* can be found in Mac Gearailt, 'Change and Innovation', pp. 459–61. Correspondences to *Iliad*, XVIII.318–22 are discussed by Clarke, 'Reconstructing the medieval Irish bookshelf', p. 128; cf. Myrick, p. 92.

Miles perceives the correspondence between the double simile in *TTH* and the lioness simile in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*.[599] He observes that 'Were it not for chronological difficulties, one could easily believe that *Togail Troí* has acquired a Statian simile, not from the *Thebaid* directly, but indirectly from *Togail na Tebe*.'[600] Despite the reservation which Miles shows in making a direct connection between the texts here, he does stress 'the challenge of distinguishing figures and similes that respond to classical models from those which might represent techniques of medieval oral storytelling'.[601]

Both Irish similes, then, are situated in scenes which depict the warriors about to engage in single combat; action not present in Statius's passage and greatly understated in *De Excidio Troiae Historia.* This may suggest that in the vernacular narratives, the lion simile might have been used to depict Dymas and Achilles as posing a serious threat to those they engaged in combat. If this were the case, then it would demonstrate a conscious decision on the part of the Irish authors to create a more formidable description of the characters.

6.3 Close translation with commentary

6.3.1 The 'ship of state': *Thebaid*, I.193–96, cf. *TnT*, 227–32

At *Thebaid*, I.138–43, Statius describes how the sovereignty of Thebes comes to be shared between Polynices and Eteocles by alternate year. The poet includes a complaint by one of the men from the Theban populace at lines I.173–96; this focuses on the fate of the Thebans living under the system of shared sovereignty and voicing many of the concerns which Statius has already touched upon in the preceding lines.[602] The complaint ends with a simile depicting a ship caught up in the two winds, Boreas and Eurus, its future uncertain. In the Middle Irish *Thebaid* the Theban's complaint is truncated to a reworked version of this simile alone.

'qualiter hinc gelidus Boreas, hinc nubifer Eurus | vela trahunt, nutat mediae fortuna	'Oir is e ar samail-ne, mar bis long luchtmar lanadbul occa tuargan o dib

[599] Miles also suggests that there may be some correspondence between the double simile in *Togail Troí* and a double simile from the Latin rhetorical handbook *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, which illustrates the definition of a simile using the comparison, 'Inibat in proelium, corpore tauri validissimi, impetu leonis acerrimi simili' ('He entered the battle in body like the strongest bull, in force like the fiercest lion') (*Rhetorica ad Herennium*, IV.49.62). Miles does not argue that *Rhetorica ad Herennium* could have been the direct source and instead puts forward the possibility that this double simile may have been a literary commonplace, recalled from no specific source by the Irish author. See Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 134.
[600] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 135. See also Clarke, 'International Influences' pp. 87–89.
[601] Miles, *Heroic Saga*, p. 131
[602] For a detailed discussion see Ahl, pp. 2828–31. The Irish author's response to Statius's narratorial apostrophes in this section of the text is covered in **Chapter 5:2.1**.

carinae. | heu dubio suspensa metu tolerandaque nullis | aspera sors populis! hic imperat, ille minatur.' (*Thebaid*, I.193–96)	gaethaib condtrardaib cona fitir cia gaeth risa rachad, uair is adbul a imned 7 a eccomnart duind *a* beith ua rigi 7 ua rigsmacht in rig ac buileam .i. Ethiocles, [7] ua tamach[603] *7* ua tomaitheam in rig araill .i. Polinices.' (*TnT*, 227–32)
'Even as chill Boreas pulls canvass one way and cloudy Eurus another and the vessel's fate wavers between (alas harsh lot, hanging in doubtful suspense, too hard for any folk to bear!); the one commands, the other threatens.'	'For this is a simile of us, as it were a great capacious full vast ship being beaten by two contrary winds so that it knows not with which wind it should go, for vast is the suffering and weakness *from* being under the kingship and kingly rule of the king we are with, that is, Eteocles, and the extortion *and* threat of the other king, that is, Polynices.'

While the complaint of the anonymous Theban was abbreviated in the Irish vernacular, the 'ship of state' simile was revised and expanded. The personification of the winds as Boreas and Eurus was left out and the turmoil of 'long luchtmar lanadbul' ('a great capacious full mighty ship') (*TnT*, 228) is described instead as being caused by 'dib gaethaib condtrardaib' ('two contrary winds') (*TnT*, 229–30). Statius's jarring depiction of 'nutat mediae fortuna carinae' ('the vessel's fate wavers between') (*Thebaid*, I.194) is elucidated in the translation; which explains that the ship knows not which wind to go with (*TnT*, 229). The words of the complainant, that the people's lot is hard to bear (*Thebaid*, I.195–96) were rephrased into the explanation that *adbul* ('vast') (*TnT*, 229) is the *imned* ('suffering') (*TnT*, 230) and *eccomnart* ('weakness') (*TnT*, 230) of the people under the kingship of one king but anticipating another. In the Irish text, rather than translate Statius's simile word for word, the translator has the complainant explain it.

The elucidation of the simile accounts for its amplification, which shares some similarity with Lactantius's commentary on the corresponding lines from the *Thebaid*. The first of Lactantius's notes on this simile explains the 'ship of state' comparison:

> 193 QUALITER H(INC) G(ELIDUS) B(OREAS) optima comparatio: ignotae rei descriptio per similitudinem notae. et egregie rempublicam naui iactatae tempestibus simulat, sicut Tulius <pro s. Rosc. 51>: 'ad gubernacula rei publicae' et Horatius <carm. 1.14, 1–2> 'o navis, referent in mare te novi fluctus?' † etiam ita et iste † facit comparationem contra artem poeticam. nam comparatio a persona Boreae debet induci. similes ventos fratribus comparauit, nauim reipublicae, cum bellis civilibus turbaretur. (*ISTC*, I.654–64)

[603] Calder translates 'dread', which he may have taken from *eDIL* s.v. *tám*, I change to 'extortion', after *eDIL* s.v. *tobach, tabach*.

> 193 EVEN AS CHILL BOREAS, an excellent comparison: the description of the unknown thing by the likeness of a known one. And it outstandingly compares the republic to a ship of state being tossed by storms, just as Tullius < for s. Roscius. 51> 'at the helm of the republic' and Horace <carm. 1.14, 1–2> 'o ship, [do] new waves force you back to sea?' † For in the same way † he makes comparison against poetic art. For the comparison ought to be drawn from the character of Boreas. Similarly, he compared the winds with the brothers and the ship of state when disturbed by civil war.

Although the Irish translator does not directly link the simile to the concept of the ship of state as Lactantius does, the acknowledgement in the Irish text that the imagery of the ship is 'ar samail-ne' ('a simile of us') may recall Lactantius's interpretation that Statius was making comparison of the winds with the brothers and their effect on the ship of state, which has been thrown into turmoil by their conflict (*ISTC*, I.663–64).[604] By having the complainant acknowledge that his words reflect 'a simile of us', the Irish author seems to have intended to draw the reader's attention to the comparison. This is reminiscent of the author's technique of prioritising exegetical information so that it often breaks in on direct speech or descriptive narrative (e.g. *TnT*, 1898–1900, cf. *Thebaid*, V.239–41, see **Chapter 5:3.2**).

Lactantius's comment on *Thebaid*, I.196 provides an interpretation of Statius's words 'hic imperat, ille minatur' ('this one commands, this one threatens'):

> 196 HIC IMPERAT I(LLE) M(INATUR) id est imperat Eteocles, quia fidem fregit, minatur Polynices, quia amisit imperium. et necesse est populis Thebanorum sub unius imperio duorum timere saeuitiam, quoniam alter speratur uenire. [aut generaliter explicuit: modo hic, modo ille]. (*ISTC*, I.665–69)

> 196 THIS ONE COMMANDS, THIS ONE THREATENS, that is, Eteocles commands, because he broke trust, Polynices threatens, because he has lost command. And it is inevitable that under the command of one the people of Thebes fear the cruelty of both, since the other is hoped for to come. [or more generally explained: at one time this one, at another that one].

In the Irish *Thebaid*, the corresponding text from the *Thebaid* was reworked into a more detailed description of the division of sovereignty at Thebes. This explains the predicament of the Theban people, 'ua rigsmacht in rig ac buileam .i. Ethiocles, ua tamach *7* ua tomaitheam in rig araill .i. Polinices' ('under the kingship and kingly rule of the king we are with, that is, Eteocles, and the extortion *and* threat of the other king, that is, Polynices) (*TnT*, 230–32). Like the note above, this does not appear to suggest a direct correspondence between the two texts.

[604] As with other examples of Lactantius's commentary discussed in **Chapter 4:3.5**, if the Irish author did have access to this note in the commentary, he has not cited the references to Cicero or Horace either.

Yet, conceptually there are similarities to the interpretation here and if the Irish translator did not have Lactantius to guide his explanation, then it seems that the Late Antique exegete and medieval Irish translator were reading Statius in the same way at this point in the text.

Overall, the Irish version of the simile appears to have became a type of exegesis for the reader to follow. Therefore, it seems that rather than providing a direct translation of Statius's simile, the Irish author's main concern in this instance was to ensure that the meaning of the simile was understood.

6.3.2 Tyrrhenian waters and Enceladus, *Thebaid,* III.594–97, cf. *TnT*, 1284–1301

Under Jupiter's command and with the assistance of the God of War a passion for war sweeps through the Argive peoples in *Thebaid*, III.575–97.[605] The sound of men shouting as they burst into Argos and cry for war is depicted in a double simile which compares this noise to the groaning of Tyrrhenian waters or Enceladus attempting to change which side he lies on under the fiery mountain where he is bound (*Thebaid*, III.594–97). The first simile, referring to the groaning of Tyrrhenian waters, was left out of the Irish translation. The second, describing Enceladus, was reworked in the vernacular text and is immediately followed by an extensive explanation of who Enceladus was, and how he came to be placed under Mount Etna. At the end of this explanation the simile was restated, and the translator highlighted that this was what the shout of the Greeks was like as they sought to encounter the Thebans.

it clamor ad auras, | quantus Tyrrheni gemitus salis, aut ubi temptat | Enceladus mutare latus; super igneus antris | mons tonat: exundant apices, fluctusque Pelorus | contrahit, et sperat tellus abrupta reverti. (*Thebaid*, III.594–97)	[C]oma coma samalta i[n] nuall sin 7 tulborb fogragad na cruinni comairdi ac athcumsgugad don choraid curata .i. Encheladus, da sleibtib sarmora na Sigili srotaidi. Et is amlaid innister co rugad an corad sin fa sleibtib na Sigili .i. daine mera mileata badar an tus na haimsiri 7 is i comairli rochindsed, tocht do togail nime 7 rigi do gabail. Et o 'dchualadar *na* dee sin .i. Ioip 7 Apaill 7 na dei a[r] chena, dochuirsedar cath risna coradaib sin 7 ríu seig aderthái míc an talman ara truma 7 ara talmaigeacht. Ramebaid orra an cath sin, 7 rochenglaid 7 rachuibrigid risna deib iad, 7 dochuiread fer dib fa shliab Athna. Et is ed innister an trath chuireas cor[606] no culscal[607]

[605] Statius's likely models for this passage are discussed by Ganiban, p. 58. See also Harry Snijder, ed. with commentary, *Statius. Thebaid: a commentary on Book III* (Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1968), pp. 235–36.
[606] Calder translates 'makes a turn', I change to 'twists', *eDIL* s.v. 1 *cor*, 7.
[607] Calder translates 'utters a roar', I change to 'turns', *eDIL* s.v. *cumscal*.

	de, conseideann sruth casracha teinead a taeb ant sleibi, 7 roceanglaid andsin Enceladus bá tri sleibtib na Sigili .i. Lilbeus 7 Pacinnus 7 Pilorus, 7 antan concumscaigenn an coraid sin, crithfograigid 7 cruinne na firmaiminnti uili, 7 ba cosmail rissin nuallgair na nGreg ag iarraid thachair risna Tiabanda. (*TnT*, 1284–1301)
The shouting goes aloft, loud as the groaning of Tyrrhenian waters or as when Enceladus tries to change his side; above, the fiery mountain thunders in its caverns, the peaks gush forth, Pelorus contracts his waves, and the severed earth hopes to return.	[S]o that shout was like the rough rude noise of the level world at being convulsed by the warlike warrior, that is, Enceladus, from his very great mountains of watery Sicily. And so it is told that that warrior was born among the mountains of Sicily, that is, there were wild warlike men at the beginning of time, and this is the counsel they resolved on, to go and sack heaven and seize sovereignty. And when the gods, that is, Jupiter, Apollo and all the gods heard that, they gave battle to those warriors, and against them those who were called the sons of the earth because of their heaviness and earthiness. That battle went against them, and they were bound and constrained by the gods there; and one of them was placed under mount Etna. And it is said that when he twists or turns from [under] it, a stream of fiery hail escapes blows out from the side of the mountain; and Enceladus was bound there under the three mountains of Sicily, that is, Lilybaeus, Pachynus, and Pelorus; and when that warrior moves, the globe of the whole firmament trembling resounds. And like that was the yell of the Greeks as they sought battle with the Thebans.

The imagery of ‘tulborb fogragad’ (‘the rough rude noise’) made by the level globe as it is ‘athcumsgugud’ (‘being convulsed’) by Enceladus at *TnT*, 1285 may have derived from Statius’s depiction of the Tyrrhenian waters ‘groaning’ (*gemitus*, *Thebaid*, III.595). The description of Enceladus causing the movement of the world ‘da sleibtib sarmora na Sigili srotaidi’ (‘from his very great mountains of watery Sicily’) (*TnT*, 1286–87) appears to allude to Statius’s words ‘exundant apices’ (‘the peaks gush forth’) (*Thebaid*, III.596). The poet’s reference to the peninsula Pelorus at *Thebaid*, III.596, was replaced with a simpler reference to Sicily as the location of Enceladus’s hills (*TnT*, 1287). At *TnT*, 1286 the explanation that Enceladus was the *corad curata* (‘warlike warrior’) who caused the level world to shake in this way was added by the Irish author in the form of an *id est*. This highlights the exegetical

nature of the Irish simile which, like the 'ship of state' simile discussed above, is concerned to ensure that the reader is provided with enough information to understand the comparison.

In the case of Enceladus, it seems the Irish translator felt that further elucidation was required. The tale of Enceladus given in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* is not comparable with the information in the corresponding note of Lactantius's commentary (*ISTC*, III.1241–45) and one must look elsewhere for the source. Although no direct source has been discovered to date, similarities in the Middle Irish text with the first part of VM II, 67, suggest that they may have shared a source:

> 67 De Titanibus
> Ferunt fabule Terram diis, qui eam inhabitare dedignati sunt, iratam Titanas, qui et Gigantes dicuntur, serpentinis munitos pedibus in sui ultionem procreasse, qui uiribus confisi celum moles montibus extruentes dissipare deosque ad terram substernere aggressi sunt. Qui Iouis fulminibus obiectuque a Minerua Gorgone capite prostrati, duci eorum Athlanti celi onere imposito ipsi terrarum molibus obstructi sunt. Quorum etiam Enceladus, qui et Briareus siue Egeon dicitur, ardenti Ethne subpositus est, unde adhuc ardere latusque mutando totam Siciliam tremefacere fumique uapore complere dicitur. (VM II, 67.1–11)

> 67 On the Titans
> The fables tell that Earth, angered at the gods who did not deign to dwell upon her, to avenge herself begot the Titans (who are also called Giants), equipped with snake-like feet. They, relying on their strength, they undertook to overthrow heaven by piling up rocks on the mountains and to cast the gods down to earth. Laid low by Jupiter's thunderbolts and by the Gorgon head cast before them by Medusa, and when the burden of the sky was put upon their leader, Atlas, they themselves were buried under masses of earth. Also, one of them, Enceladus, who is also called Briareus or Egeon, was placed beneath fiery Etna, from where he is said still to burn and by changing side to make all Sicily quake and to fill [her] with clouds of smoke.

The description in the Irish vernacular of the wild warlike men who resolve 'tocht do togail nime 7 rigi do gabail' ('to go and sack heaven and seize sovereignty') (*TnT*, 1290) resembles the Mythographer's account of the Giants undertaking to overthrow heaven ('celum [...] aggressi sunt') (VM II, 67.4–6). The Irish explanation that Jupiter, Apollo, and all the gods gave battle to the warriors is less detailed than the Mythographer's description of Jupiter's thunderbolts and Medusa's Gorgon head casting them down. However, each narrative draws on the role of the gods in defeating their aggressors at a parallel point in the respective texts, which implies a shared model. The subsequent descriptions of one them being placed under Mount Etna are particularly close and worth looking at in parallel. The similarities in the text are highlighted in italics for clarity:

Ramebaid orra an cath sin, *7 rochenglaid 7 rachuibrigid risna deib iad, 7 dochuiread fer dib fa shliab Athna. Et is ed innister an trath chuireas cor no culscal de, conseideann sruth casracha teinead a taeb ant sleibi*. (*TnT*, 1294–97)	[D]uci eorum Athlanti celi onere imposito ipsi *terrarum molibus obstructi sunt*. *Quorum etiam Enceladus*, qui et Briareus siue Egeon dicitur, *ardenti Ethne subpositus est, unde adhuc ardere latusque mutando totam Siciliam tremefacere fumique uapore complere dicitur*. (VM II, 67.7–9)
That battle went against them, *and they were bound and constrained by the gods there; and one of them was placed under mount Etna. And it is said that when he twists or turns from [under] it, a stream of fiery hail escapes blows out from the side of the mountain*.	[W]hen the burden of the sky was put upon their leader, Atlas, *they themselves were buried under masses of earth*. *Also, one of them, Enceladus*, who is also called Briareus or Egeon, *was placed beneath fiery Etna, from where he is said still to burn and by changing side to make all Sicily quake and to fill [her] with clouds of smoke*.

In both texts this section bears a striking affinity to a description of Aetna given by Aeneas in Virgil's *Aeneid*, III.578–82:

> 'fama est Enceladi semustum fulmine corpus
> urgeri mole hac ingentemque insuper Aetnam
> impositam ruptis flammam exspirare caminis,
> et fessum quotiens mutet latus, intremere omnem
> murmure Trinacriam et caelum subtexere fumo.'
> (*Aeneid*, III.578–82)
>
> 'The story runs that Enceladus' form, scathed by the thunderbolt, is weighed down by that mass, and mighty Aetna, piled above, from its burst furnaces breathes forth flame; and ever as he changes his weary side all Trinacria moans and trembles, veiling the sky in smoke.'

Indeed, there are close correspondences between the second part of the Mythographer's account (VM II, 67.11–21), which analyses the fabulous nature of the tale, and Servius's note on *Aeneid*, III.578. This may indicate that the original model for the passage was developed within the Virgilian commentary tradition. However, this section of the Mythographer's narrative has no parallel in the Middle Irish text.

Instead, the Irish translator provided further exegesis of the hills under which Enceladus was bound '7 roceanglaid andsin Enceladus bá tri sleibtib na Sigili .i. Lilbeus 7 Pacinnus 7 Pilorus' ('and Enceladus was bound there under the three mountains of Sicily, that is, Lilybaeus, Pachynus, and Pelorus') (*TnT*, 1297–99). This is reminiscent of Isidore's observations on Sicily, 'Prius autem Trinacria dicta propter tria ἄκρα, id est promontoria: Pelorum, Pachinum et Lilybaeum' ('But in earliest times it was known as Trinacria, because

it has three ἄκρα ("capes"), that is, promontories: Pelorus, Pachynum, and Lilybaeum') (*Etym.* XIV.vi.32).[608]

The extensive exegetical information included in the Irish simile distances the reader from the comparison of the Greek army's shout to the sound of Enceladus. Therefore, it seems likely that the restating of the simile at the end of passage was designed to return the reader back into the main narrative.

6.4 Descriptive interpretation

6.4.1 Eteocles as shepherd, *Thebaid*, VII.393–97, cf. *TnT*, 2715–16

Roughly a quarter of the similes translated into the Middle Irish *Thebaid* appear as a descriptive interpretation of the original. At *Thebaid*, VII.375–90, as the Argive army approaches Thebes, Eteocles gives a speech to his troops to buoy them up for the coming fight. He then gives them their orders for war (*Thebaid*, VII. 390–92). This is followed by a simile which compares Eteocles' deployment of these troops with a shepherd releasing his flock from their pen in the morning.

perspicuas sic luce fores et virgea pastor | claustra levat, dum terra recens; iubet ordine primo | ire duces, media stipantur plebe martiae; | ipse levat gravidas et humum tractura parentum | ubera, succiduasque apportat matribus agnas. (*Thebaid*, VII.393–97)	Roordaich curadu croda re cathugud inn agaid gaiscedach Grec amuich [a]n-echtair. (*TnT*, 2715–16)
So the shepherd raises the doors and wattle barriers when the light shines through, while the earth is fresh; he bids the leaders go first, the flock of ewes is packed in the middle; he himself raises the pregnant ones and the udders of parents like to trail the ground and brings the stumbling lambs to their dams.	He ordered brave warriors to fight against Greek champions away outside.

Statius's pastoral depiction of Eteocles as the attentive shepherd appears ironic, for it is his tyranny and refusal to return sovereignty to his brother that leads the Thebans to war.[609] Johannes Smolenaars observes that:

[608] Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid* III.582 and Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, V.346–53.
[609] Vessey, p. 209, n. 1. For alternative view see Ahl, 'Statius' *Thebaid*', 2880–81.

> The idyllic pastoral scene and the shepherd's concern for his flock contrast vividly with the situation compared; the implicit representation of Eteocles as a general jealous of his men's lives, though leading them forth to destruction in an unjust cause, is particularly disturbing.[610]

At *Thebaid*, IV.363–68, Statius highlighted Eteocles' neglect for the Theban people and his tyrannical rule in a simile which compared him to a wolf that has stormed a sheepfold; a comparison which the Irish author chose to retain:

ille velut pecoris lupus expugnator opimi, | pectora tabenti sanie gravis hirtaque saetis | ora cruentata deformis hiantia lana, | decedit stabulis huc illuc turbida versans | lumina, si duri comperta clade sequantur | pastores, magnique fugit non inscius ausi. (*Thebaid*, IV.363–68)	Et ua he samail Ethiocles, mar bis fael craesach confadach iter ceithrib arna comach. Anddar les ar teiched conlenfaitis oegaireada na tret trenmarbtha sin e uaden. (*TnT*, 1602–04)
He is like a wolf that has stormed a fat sheepfold; his chest is heavy with rotting gore, the gaping bristly mouth ugly with bloodstained wool; leaving the pens, he turns uneasy glances this way and that to see whether the hardy shepherds have discovered the disaster and follow; conscious of great audacity, he flees.	And this was the likeness of Eteocles, as it were a gluttonous raging wolf is among beasts after the slaughter. It seems to him in flight that the shepherds of the slaughtered flock would follow him himself.

As Ruth Parkes notes, the wolf's slaughter of the sheep appears to correspond to the death of the fifty Theban men who were sent to ambush Tydeus in *Thebaid* Book II.[611] The simile in Book VII reverses the situation, but Eteocles' interest in the wellbeing of his people appears distinctly hollow.

In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, following Eteocles' deployment of the troops (*TnT*, 2714–15), Statius's shepherd simile appears only as a description of Eteocles commanding his warriors to fight away outside. The impersonal nature of the depiction draws away from Statius's subjective commentary on the king's behaviour and removes the allusion to the earlier comparison in *Thebaid* Book IV. The Irish translator therefore provides a more objective view of the situation. Poppe also observes a similar approach in the development of *Imtheachta Aeniasa*. He notes that in similes rendered into Irish from *Aeneid*, VIII.18–25 and VIII.621–23,

[610] Smolenaars, *Statius. Thebaid VII*, pp. 175–76.
[611] Parkes, *Statius. Thebaid 4*, p. 201.

> [A] description is substituted for Virgil's simile. The Irish narrator's voice is less intrusive and conforms more closely to the demands of objective, detached narrative description which is typical of Irish narrative.[612]

Like the similes in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, Poppe demonstrates that the adaptation and employment of similes in *Imtheachta Aeniasa* is varied.[613]

It is possible that the interpretation of this shepherd simile in the Middle Irish text may reflect the translator's concern to depict high-ranking figures in the narrative, such as Eteocles, as warrior-like. In *Thebaid* Book IX, Statius depicted Hippomedon shouting out in despair to the god Mars as the river Ismenos threatens to drown him:

> 'fluvione (pudet!), Mars inclute, merges
> hanc animam, segnesque lacus et stagna subibo
> ceu pecoris custos, subiti torrentis iniquis
> interceptus aquis?' (*Thebaid*, IX.506–10)
>
> 'For shame, renowned Mars, will you sink this my spirit in a river? Shall I go down beneath sluggish meres and pools like a shepherd caught in the hostile waters of a sudden torrent?'

Horrified that he might die an unheroic death, Statius has Hippomedon compare himself to a shepherd drowning in a river. In the Middle Irish narrative, Hippomedon's humiliation is starkly put:

> 'As truagh duit, a Mairt, a dei in catha, bás mar so do imirt ormsa, mar dodhenta ar midlaech.' (*TnT*, 3642–43)
>
> 'Woe to you, O Mars, god of battle, that you do inflict a death like this on me, as might be done upon a coward.'

Statius's simile comparing Hippomedon to a drowning shepherd was replaced with a simile in which the warrior bemoans that his death is like that of a *midlaech* ('a coward'). The Irish interpretation may suggest that the translator deemed the comparison of a high-status figure, such as Eteocles or Hippomedon, to a shepherd as culturally inappropriate for the target audience.[614]

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[612] Poppe, '*Imtheachta Aeniasa*', p. 81.
[613] Poppe, '*Imtheachta Aeniasa*', pp. 79–87.
[614] Statian similes translated in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* including any shepherd imagery were generally omitted, see *Thebaid*, II.675–81 (cf. *TnT*, 1032–37); *Thebaid*, VIII.572–76 (cf. *TnT*, 3206–07); *Thebaid*, IX.189–95 (cf. *TnT*, 3475–78). *Thebaid*, IV.363–68 (cf. *TnT*, 1602–04) appears to be the only exception.

6.5 Close translation with commentary and a new Irish simile based upon Statius's descriptive narrative

6.5.1 The Calydonian boar, *Thebaid*, II.469–75, cf. *TnT*, 866–78

In Book II of the *Thebaid*, Statius depicts Tydeus's visit to Eteocles at Thebes: his mission, to persuade Eteocles of Polynices' right to rule the kingdom (II.389–467).[615] After arriving at Thebes, Tydeus presents Polynices' claim to the kingdom to Eteocles (II.393–409) but does so without diplomacy.[616] Eteocles subsequently uses Tydeus's aggressive approach to support his refusal of Polynices' claim (II.415–51).[617] Tydeus then interrupts Eteocles' speech to insist that the kingdom be returned to Polynices and, through his incautious words, effectively declares war on Thebes (II.452–67).[618] As Tydeus is depicted standing on the threshold of Thebes, ready to leave, Statius uses an extended simile to compare him to the Calydonian boar.[619] In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, this simile was elaborated upon.

Haec audax etiamnum in limine retro | vociferans, iam tunc impulsa per agmina praeceps, | evolat. Oeneae vindex sic ille Dianae | erectus saetis et aduncae fulmine malae, | cum premeret Pelopea phalanx, saxa obvia volvens | fractaque perfossis arbusta Acheloia ripis, | iam Telamona solo, iam stratum Ixiona linquens | te, Meleagre, subit: ibi demum cuspide lata | haesit et obnixo ferrum laxauit in armo. (*Thebaid*, II.469–75)	Et o ralabair Tid dana derrscaigteach amlaid sin ar tairrseach an tigi rig, tainig roime co dian 7 co debil amal tanig an torc tren adbal allaidh dochuir Déan d'indrad 7 do sugad crich na Calidoine, ar ba ferg le can idbairt do denam di do lucht na Cailidoine, co n-eirged a guairi gairblíath gaisideach amal fhidbaid osa cind contaidli[g]dis saig(n)ena solusta asa fiaclaib[620] croma cruaidgera ima leiccnib[621] langranda re glondbeimnig[622] a

[615] In depth discussions of Tydeus's mission to Thebes and rhetorical exchange with Eteocles can be found in Vessey, pp. 143–46; Ahl, 2873–77; and Kyle Gervais, ed., trans., with commentary, *Statius. Thebaid 2* (Oxford: OUP, 2017), pp. 207–34.
[616] In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, lines 828–33, which correspond to the decision to send Tydeus as envoy at *Thebaid*, II.363–92, Tydeus's speech at *Thebaid*, II.393–409, and Eteocles' response at *Thebaid*, II.410–432 are complicated by the fact that they have be shown to be a later interpolation to help bridge a lacuna in the text. For details, see Miles, '*Riss in Mundtuirc*, pp. 77–78 and **Chapter 2:2.2**.
[617] Cf. *TnT*, 833–45.
[618] Cf. *TnT*, 845–64.
[619] Statius's simile is heavily based upon Ovid's account of the Calydonian boar hunt in *Metamorphoses*, VIII.281–423, see Gervais, *Statius. Thebaid 2*, pp. 234–36.
[620] Calder translates this as 'teeth', which I change to 'tusks', see *eDIL* s.v. *fíacail*. Although either translation could be used, 'tusks' seems more fitting in the context.
[621] Calder translates 'cheeks', I change to 'jaws' as, although it could mean either, 'jaws' seems to make more sense in the context, *eDIL* s.v. *lecca*.
[622] Calder translates this as 'loud smiting', which I amend to 'deadly smiting', see *eDIL* s.v. 1 *glond* and cf. *TTLL*, 663 'ri glondbeimnig na claideb icá clód' ('the deadly smiting of the swords overthrowing them').

	claideam[623] no a clomair[624] an trath contu-indsned ara cheili hé contachlad 7 contógluaiseadh cairrgi troma tuinidi an talman 7 fualascada[625] fada na fidbaidi a heochairimlib srotha Achileus antan contuairgidis sealgaireada sirluatha gasraidi Greg cor-fhagaib an torc sin Talimon taraheis 7 co ratrascair an coraid curata Ixion co ramarb an milid morchalma Me[l]iagér ua deoid hé. (*TnT*, 865–78)
This still on the threshold he boldy shouts behind him and in the shouting dashes out headlong through he reeling ranks. So Oenean Diana's avenger, standing erect with his bristles and the lightning bolt of his curving jaw, as the Pelopean band presses him hard, he rolled rocks out of his way and broken trees from Achelous' perforated banks, now leaves Telamon stretched on the ground, now Ixion, and turns on Meleager. Here at last he stops at thrust of spear and loosens the steel in his struggling shoulder.[626]	And when daring distinguished Tydeus had spoken in that way on the threshold of the king's house, he came forward swiftly and inauspiciously as came the strong huge wild-boar which Diana sent to devastate and to swallow up the confines of Calydon. For she was angry that no sacrifice was offered to her by the people of Calydon. So that his rough grey hairy bristles rose like a wood above his head, so that bright lightnings gleamed from his curved hard and sharp tusks about his very hideous jaws, with a deadly smiting of his tusks or his jaws when he would crush them together, so that he would dig up and root out heavy fixed rocks from the earth and the long branches of the wood from the outer edges of the river Achelous, when the ever-swift hunters of the young warriors of Greece were beating [them] so that boar left Telamon behind him, and overthrew the warlike warrior Ixion, until the greatly daring soldier Meleager slew him at last.

The Irish translator's response to Statius's epic was rarely straightforward and in the vernacular text above additional source material was used to provide background information for the Irish simile. New comparative imagery was also introduced and the original comparative description from the *Thebaid* was amplified. Lines 866–69 of the Irish simile introduce the idea that Tydeus is like the wild-boar Diana sent to devastate Calydon by providing the background information to elucidate Statius's reference to *Oeneae vindex Dianae* ('Oenean Diana's avenger') (*Thebaid*, II.469).[627] The Irish text here appears to derive

[623] Calder translates this as 'sword', I change to 'tusk', *eDIL* s.v. *claideb* (b).
[624] Calder translates 'tusks', I change to 'jaws', *eDIL* s.v. *glomar* (b).
[625] Calder translates 'plantations', I change to 'branches', *eDIL* s.v. *fúalascach*.
[626] I have changed Shackleton Bailey's English translation here using Gervais, *Statius. Thebaid 2*, p. 37.
[627] For discussion on the interpretation of this phrase, see Shackleton Bailey, *Statius. Thebaid I–7*, p. 129, n. 45 and Gervais, *Statius. Thebaid 2*, p. 235.

from the corresponding note in Lactantius's commentary.[628] Lactantius describes how Diana sent a huge boar to lay waste to the land of Calydon to punish the Calydonian king, Oeneus, for his failure to make sacrifices to her:

> 469 OENEAE VINDEX (SIC ILLE DIANAE) Oeneus, Porthaonis filius, Aetoliae rex, cuius ciuitas est Calydon nobilissima. et summam potestatem regni sui turbauit neglegentia sacrorum, annua siquidem uota pro imperii fructibus celebrans numen Dianae contempsit. propter quam nimiam indignationem oppressus est, ut uideretur omnes placaturus, si illam solum adorasset. ea aprum magnitudinis summae regioni eius immisit, qui uastatis Calydoniis terris Calydonius ab urbe gentis est appellatus. (*ISTC*, II.1267–75)
>
> 469 SO OENEAN DIANA'S AVENGER, Oeneus, son of Porthaon, king of Aetolia, whose most famous city is Calydon. And he threw into confusion the great power of his kingdom by his neglect of rites, since while celebrating the annual sacrifices for the crops of his kingdom, he disregarded the goddess Diana. On account of this great anger of hers he was overthrown so that it appeared that he would please everyone, if he had only worshipped her. She sent into his country a boar of great size which, having laid waste to the Calydonian lands, was called the Calydonian [boar] after the city of that people.

The Irish author's description of 'an torc tren adbal allaidh' ('the strong huge wild-boar') (*TnT*, 867) appears to reflect Lactantius's description of Diana sending to Calydon 'aprum magnitudinis summae' ('a boar of great size') (*ISTC*, II.1273–74). The imagery of the boar 'uastatis Calydoniis terris' ('having laid waste to the Calydonian lands') (*ISTC*, II.1274–75) is also close to the Irish depiction of the boar being sent by Diana 'd'indrad 7 do sugad crich na Calidoine' ('to devastate and to swallow up the confines of Calydon') (*TnT*, 867–68). Lactantius's summary of Oeneus's failure to sacrifice to Diana and her ensuing anger was abbreviated into a shorter account in the Irish, which explains only that the boar was sent 'ar ba ferg le can idbairt do denam di do lucht na Cailidoine' ('For she was angry that no sacrifice was offered her by the people of Calydon') (*TnT*, 868–69).

The Irish author appears to have drawn upon Lactantius's exegesis to develop his own interpretation of the Calydonian boar simile and to provide clarity for the reader in understanding the allusion. By illuminating the poet's simile in this way, the Irish translator may have intended to explicate the simile's connection to the tale of Tydeus's fratricide of Meleager told in Calydonian boar hunt told earlier in the narrative (*TnT*, 348–65). The description of the devastation caused by the Calydonian boar in the Irish simile, therefore, does serve as background information. It difficult to imagine, however, that the author

[628] See **Chapter 4:4.2**. Although the tale of the wild-boar hunt and the death of Meleager does appear earlier at *TnT*, 348–65 it is worth noting that the details here are not provided as part of the earlier exegesis.

included this detail without intending to draw the reader's attention to the potential destruction that the war at Thebes will bring.

The Irish author then built upon Statius's illustration of the boar's appearance, 'erectus saetis et aduncae fulmine malae' ('standing erect with his bristles and the lightning bolt of his curved tusks') (*Thebaid*, II.469–70). In the Irish vernacular Statius's description was amplified using various techniques. The translator used an alliterative string of adjectives, a native narrative convention, to bolster the image of the boar's *saetae* ('bristles'), which became 'guairi gairblíath gaisideach' ('rough grey hairy bristles') (*TnT*, 869–70). He also introduced a new simile into to the comparison, illustrating how the boar's bristles rose 'amal fhidbaid osa cind' ('like a wood above his head') (*TnT*, 870). This simile of the boar's bristles rising like a *fidbaid* ('wood') is also reminiscent of imagery in Irish native narratives which depict a character's hair rising like the branches of a hawthorn.[629] This trope is discussed in **Chapter 6:6.1** below.

The Irish translator expanded upon Statius's reference to 'aduncae fulmine malae' ('the thunderbolt of his curving jaw') (*Thebaid*, II.470) and describes, 'contaidli[g]dis saig(n)ena solusta asa fiaclaib croma cruaidgera ima leiccnib langranda' ('so that bright lightnings gleamed from his curved hard and sharp tusks about his very hideous jaws') (*TnT*, 870–71). It is possible that the additional imagery of the boar's *fíaclai* ('tusks') (*TnT*, 871) derives from Lactantius's exegesis at *ISTC*, II.1299 which explains that Statius's words refer to the boar's *aduncos dentes* ('curved tusks'). The poet's description of the boar's *mala* ('jaw') was amplified to describe the animal's 'leiccnib langranda' ('very hideous jaws') (*TnT*, 871) in the Irish vernacular. The translator continued to incorporate alliterative phrases to his rendering, often incorporating new adjectives to Statius's descriptions, as can be seen in the previous example and in the imagery of the boar's tusks being 'croma cruaidgera' ('curved hard and sharp') (*TnT*, 871).

As the Irish simile plays out, some aspects of the boar in the simile appear to draw on the imagery of Tydeus as he leaves the council at Thebes. For instance, the boar is portrayed 're glondbeimnig a claideam no a clomair an trath contu indsned ara cheili hé contachlad' ('with a deadly smiting of his tusks or his jaws when he would crush them together') (*TnT*, 872–73) which seems to recall the illustration of Tydeus at *Thebaid*, II.478, *infrendens* ('grinding his teeth'). The imagery of the *Pelopea phalanx* ('Pelopean band') (*Thebaid*, II.471) was also expanded upon and became the 'sealgaireada sirluatha gasraidi Greg' ('ever-swift hunters of the young warriors of Greece') (*TnT*, 875–76).

[629] A Classical model may also be possible, cf. 'setae similes rigidis hastilibus horrent' ('his bristles stood up like lines of stiff spear-shafts') (*Metamorphoses*, VIII.285).

The Irish simile then follows Statius more closely in the depiction of Telamon and Ixion being injured by the boar (*TnT*, 876–77). A simplified narrative follows, explaining 'co ramarb an milid morchalma Me[l]iagér ua deoid hé' ('until the greatly daring soldier Meleager slew him at last') (*TnT*, 877–78). This reworking removed the poet's description of the boar's reaction to being speared by Meleager, 'ibi demum cuspide lata | haesit et obnixo ferrum laxauit in armo' ('Here at last he stops at thrust of spear and loosens the steel in his struggling shoulders') (*Thebaid*, II.474–75).

6.6 Replacement Irish similes

6.6.1 *Thebaid*, II.544, cf. *TnT*, 928–29 *'amar scaith sciath sciach' ('like the bristling defense of a hawthorn')*

In *Thebaid* Book II, following Tydeus's disastrous attempt to persuade Eteocles to pass the sovereignty of Thebes to Polynices, Eteocles sends fifty Thebans to ambush and kill Tydeus as he returns to Argos (II.482–93). Once the ambush begins, one of the Thebans throws a spear at Tydeus. The spear only narrowly misses him when it becomes stuck in his boarskin cloak (*Thebaid*, II.538–43). Statius describes Tydeus's horror at the attack before immediately illustrating how his fear gives way to anger:

> tunc horrere comae sanguisque in corda gelari
> huc ferus atque illuc animum pallentiaque ira
> ora ferens.[630] (*Thebaid*, II.544–46)
>
> His hair stood on end and the blood froze in his heart. Fiercely he points mind and visage pale with anger this way and that.

The Irish translation departs from Statius's description and instead Tydeus's reaction was reimagined, incorporating a simile which appears to depict Tydeus's hair bristling like a hawthorn bush:

> Et ragabustar aduath feochair fergach an gilla sin, co raergestair a fholt caem curchanach amar scaith sciath sciach;[631] 7 dobai co hudmall anshadail aínindeach ag ínred a aichthi 7 a édaig ré feoch-rugud na feirgi bai fair. (*TnT*, 927–31)

[630] On the uniqueness of the phrase *animum ferens* ('directing his attention'), see Gervais, *Statius. Thebaid 2*, p. 261.

[631] Calder translated 'scaith sciath sciach' as 'a horror of a white-thorn's wings'. The exact translation is problematic, however, I have moved away from Calder's reading of it and treat *scaith*, *eDIL* s.v. *scaí* ('flock', 'herd', 'drove'), as an abstract implying 'bristling', although *eDIL* s.v. *scáth* ('shadow')

> And wild angry terror seized that youth, so that his beautiful bushy hair rose like the bristling defence of a hawthorn, and he continued restlessly, uncertainly, angrily tearing at his face and his raiment owing to the raging wrath that was upon him.

In the Irish narrative, Tydeus's *fergach* ('anger') is depicted as part of his immediate response to the attack alongside his *aduath* ('terror'). It is anger and terror which therefore causes his hair to rise. While in the *Thebaid* Tydeus looks around wildly while he pales with anger, in the Irish translation, the warrior tears at his face and clothes, overcome by the anger which the attack provokes in him.

The Irish simile of Tydeus's hair rising 'amar scaith sciath sciach' ('like the bristling defence of a hawthorn') is reminiscent of imagery which appears in other medieval Irish narratives depicting a character's hair rising like the branches of a hawthorn. On several occasions in *Táin Bó Cúailnge* this type of image is applied to the warrior Cú Chulainn as he undergoes a transformation known as the *ríastrad* ('distortion'), which usually comes upon him in battle.[632] For instance, in *TBC-1*, 1651–57 a description is given of how Cú Chulainn's *lón láith* ('hero's flame') is the precursor to his *ríastrad*:

> Ar bá bés dó-som in tan no linged a lón láith ind, imréditis a t[h]raigthi iarma 7 a escata remi 7 muil a orcan fora lurgnib, 7 indala súil ina chend 7 araili fria chend anechtair. Docoised ferchend fora beólu. Nach findae bíd fair ba háthithir delc sciach 7 banna fola for cach finnu. Ní aithgnéad cóemu ná cardiu. Cumma no slaided ríam 7 íarma. Is de sin doratsat Fir Ól n-Écmacht in ríastartha do anmaim do C[h]oin C[h]ulaind. (*TBC-1*, 1651–57)[633]

> For it was usual with him that when his hero's flame sprang forth his feet would turn to the back and his hams turn to the front and the round muscles of his calves would come on to his shins, while one eye sank into his head and the other protruded. A man's head would go into his mouth. Every hair on him would be as sharp as a spike of hawthorn and there would be a drop of blood on every hair. He would recognise neither comrades nor friends. He would attack alike before him and behind him. Hence the men of Connacht named Cú Chulainn the Distorted One.

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is another possibility. I interpret s*ciath* ('shield'), *eDIL* s.v. 2 *scíath*, figuratively as 'defense'; and *siach* is the singular genitive form of *eDIL* s.v. *scé* ('a thornbush, a whitethorn').

[632] For further discussions of Cú Chulainn and the manifestation of his anger, see Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, 'The body in *Táin Bó Cúailnge*', in *Gablánach in scélaigecht: Celtic Studies in honour of Ann Dooley*, ed. by Sarah Sheehan, Joanne Findon, and Westley Follett (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), pp. 131–53; Miles, *Heroic Saga*, pp. 207–10; Michael Clarke, 'Translation and Transformation: A Case Study from Medieval Irish and English', in *Translating Emotion: Studies in Transformation and Renewal Between Languages*, ed. by Kathleen Shields and Michael Clarke (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 29–54 (pp. 44–54).

[633] All citations and English translations from *Táin Bó Cúailnge, Recension 1*, ed. and trans. Cecile O'Rahilly (Dublin: Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies, repr. 2006).

At the heart of Cú Chulainn's *ríastrad* lies the imagery, 'Nach findae bíd fair ba háthithir delc sciach 7 banna fola for cach finnu' ('Every hair on him would be as sharp as a spike of hawthorn and there would be a drop of blood on every hair') (*TBC-1*, 1654–55). Later in the narrative, an extensive description of Cú Chulainn's *ríastrad* (*TBC-1*, 2245–78) is given before he goes to attack his enemies in the four provinces of Ireland. Within this wider description, the author went into considerable detail to depict the effect that the distortion had on the warrior's hair:

> Ra chasnig a ḟolt imma c[h]end imar craíbred ṅdergscíach i m-bernaid at[h]álta. Ce ro crateá rígaball fó rígthorad immi iss ed mod dá rísad ubull díb dochum talman taris acht ro sesed ubull for cach óenḟinna and re frithchassad na ferge atracht dá ḟult úaso. (*TBC-1*, 2268–72)
>
> His hair curled about his head like branches of red hawthorn used to re-fence a gap in a hedge. If a noble apple-tree weighed down with fruit had been shaken about his hair, scarcely one apple would have reached the ground through it, but an apple would have stayed impaled on each separate hair because of the fierce bristling of his hair above his head.[634]

Once Cú Chulainn's distortion has come upon him in this latter example, he goes off in battle against the four provinces of Ireland. His killing is so violent in this episode that it is known in the Táin as *Sesrech Breslige* ('The Sixfold Slaughter'), which the reader is told is one of the three slaughters of the Táin in which the victims cannot be numbered (*TBC-1*, 2313). Like Cú Chulainn's *ríastrad* above, the hawthorn simile which depicts Tydeus is a precursor to an act of extraordinary violence. In Tydeus's case, he kills all but one of the fifty Thebans sent to ambush him (*Thebaid*, II.554–689, cf. *TnT*, 937–1045).

As Clarke highlights, the textual correspondences to the the imagery of Cú Chulainn's *ríastrad* can also be found in *TTH*.[635] Here it appears in an extended description of the Trojan warrior Troilus:

> [R]os-lín bruth 7 ferg, 7 atraracht an lon láich asa éton combó comḟota frisin sróin, 7 dodechatar a dí ṡúil asa chind combat sith[ith]ir artemh fria chenn anechtair. Ropo cumma a ḟolt 7 cróebred sciád. Roḟóbair an cruthsin na slógu, amal léoman léir lán luind letarthaigh reithes do thruchu torcraide. Romharb, thrá, trí cóicthu láth ngaile do Grécaib 7 Mirmedóndaib lásin cétrúathar míled ron-úc aranammus. (*TTH*, 1473–80)[636]

[634] Cf. The description of the man who overtakes Conare as he makes for Dublin in *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*, §38, see, 'The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel', ed. and trans. by Whitley Stokes, *Revue Celtique*, 22 (1901), 9–61, 165–215, 282–329, 390–437.
[635] Clarke, 'An Irish Achilles', pp. 248–50.
[636] I follow Clarke's revisions to Stokes's English translation, see Clarke, 'An Irish Achilles', p. 248.

> [F]ury and anger filled [Troilus]; and out of his forehead arose the hero's light, until it was as long as the nose; and his two eyes came out of his head until till they were longer than a hand's measure to the outside of his head. Alike were his hair and the branches of a hawthorn. He attacked the hosts in that wise, like an lion active, full of rending fury, who runs to [attack] a herd of boars. So he slew thrice fifty champions of valour of the Greeks and the Myrmidons at the first soldier's onrush which he gave against them.

Clarke observes the similarites between the description of Troilus's battle-fury and Cú Chulainn's *ríastrad* writing 'The bizarre transformation of the frenzied warrior is a repeated motif in Irish heroic narrative, but in the present example the exact correspondences in sequence of motifs suggests a precise intertextual reference.'[637] Consequently, it also seems possible that the simile of Tydeus's hair standing on end like the hawthorn from the Middle Irish *Thebaid* could recall the transformative passages from the *TBC-1, TTH,* or even both. Conversely, Miles suggests that the model for the imagery of Cú Chulainn's *ríastrad* in *TBC-1* could have been the illustration of Achilles' anger in Statius's *Achilleid* and even that of the young hero Parthenopaeus in the *Thebaid*.[638] Such intertextuality should serve to remind modern scholars that the influence of medieval Irish narratives on the translation and adaptation of the classical corpus into the Irish vernacular was reciprocal.

There is a noticeable shift in the physical focus of Tydeus's anger from Statius's *Thebaid,* where it causes him to look around (*Thebaid,* II.545–46), to the Middle Irish *Thebaid,* where the reader observes Tydeus's physical response as he tears at his face and clothes as his anger overcomes him (*TnT,* 929–31). This action may recall the physical contortions which both Cú Chulainn and Troilus undergo. Unlike the author of *TTH,* however, the author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* chose not to extend his description of Tydeus's anger further than the lines given above. This may have been because in the Middle Irish *Thebaid,* the following lines are dedicated to describing Tydeus's *aristeia* and his slaughter of the Thebans in the ambush (*TnT,* 932–1037).

If the Irish translator did see a reminiscence of Cú Chulainn in Tydeus's character, the association may not have been a positive one. Cú Chulainn's *ríastrad* leaves him so changed that he can not distinguish his comrades and friends (*TBC-1,* 1655–66). Sarah Erni suggests that 'His uncontrolled aggression during the *ríastrad* may exemplify what happens when heroic strength is misdirected and suddenly causes destruction within the hero's own society.'[639] Like Cú Chulainn, Tydeus's *ira* threatens to, and eventually does, transgress the

[637] Clarke, 'An Irish Achilles', p. 250.
[638] Miles, *Heroic Saga,* pp. 210–19.
[639] Sarah Erni, 'Inside Out... and Upside Down: Cú Chulainn and his ríastrad', *helden.heroes.héros. E-Journal zu Kulturen des Heroischen,* 1 (2013), 53–63 (p. 54).

boundaries of society. Tydeus's *ira* in killing the Thebans in *Thebaid* Book II is checked only by the intervention of Pallas Athene, whose counsel prevents him going to Thebes to show off his spoils to Eteocles in triumph (*Thebaid*, II.682–89, cf. *TnT*, 1038–45). Tydeus's *aristeia* in *Thebaid* Book II becomes a precursor for his act of cannabalism on the battlefield in *Thebaid* Book VIII when, as he lies dying, he bites into the head of his killer, Melanippus (*Thebaid*, VIII.750–62, cf. *TnT*, 3323–25). Tydeus's *rabies* ('frenzy') (*Thebaid*, IX.1) leaves both Argives and Thebans in shock. Statius tells us that his actions break the *fas odii* ('the law of hate') (*Thebaid*, IX.4), a concept explained more fully in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, 'Uair ba holc acu dul dar in recht n-índligthech ndeona .i. duni d' ithi' ('For the transgression of a rational human law, that is, to eat a man, they held a crime') (*TnT*, 3343–4).

6.6.2 Lions, tigers, and snakes: *Thebaid*, XI.530–34, cf. *TnT*, 4514–16

While imagery of the boar is more often identified with Tydeus throughout Statius's epic, during the single combat between Polynices and Eteocles which takes place at *Thebaid*, XI.496–573, the poet compares the brothers to furious boars:

> fulmineos veluti praeceps cum comminus egit
> ira sues strictisque erexit tergora saetis:
> igne tremunt oculi, lunataque dentibus uncis
> ora sonant; spectat pugnas de rupe propinqua
> venator pallens canibusque silentia suadet:
> sic avidi incurrunt. (*Thebaid*, XI.530–34)
>
> Even as a rush of anger drives destructive boars against each other, raising their backs in spiky bristles; their eyes quiver with fire, their crescent faces resound with their hooked tusks; the hunter watches the bout from a nearby rock, paling and bidding his dogs be silent: so avidly they run at one another.

Ganiban observes how the fury of the boars suggests that the brothers' 'identities as humans are even threatened, as they act out their hate like wild boars doing battle on a mountainside'.[640] Statius places the reader in the position of the hunter in the simile, who watches the scene horrified from behind a nearby rock.[641] The simile is highly subjective and draws on the theme of civil strife which prevails throughout the *Thebaid*.[642] Statius uses the boars to recall the

[640] Ganiban, pp. 189–90.
[641] Ganiban, p. 189.
[642] The simile also recalls the fight between Polynices and Tydeus in *Thebaid*, I. 408–27. See William S. Bonds, 'Two Combats in the *Thebaid*', *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 115 (1985), 225–35 (p. 232)

'fraternas acies' ('fraternal warfare') (*Thebaid*, I.1) promised in the opening lines of the epic and which he has continually recalled and built up in anticipation of this fratricidal scene.

In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, the simile depicting the boars is replaced by a string of three shorter similes:

> [A]mar da leoman loindmera, no mar da thiger trena thnuthacha, no mar da nathraig níata nemneacha. (*TnT*, 4514–16)
>
> [L]ike two eager rash lions, or two strong furious tigers, or like two combative venomous snakes.

There does not appear to be a similar string of similes in medieval Irish narratives which could have inspired this replacement. Similar metaphors for strength in battle are, however, attributed to Cadmus in the historical prologue, where he is described putting on his armour, 'co mbruth miled, co feirg leoman, co neimh nathrach' ('with a soldier's heat, a lion's rage, and a serpent's venom') (*TnT*, 59–60).[643] Such metaphors appear elsewhere in medieval Irish narratives. For instance, in *TTLL* during an attack on the Greeks, the anonymous narrator of the tale bemoans the fate of any man who encountered the Trojan warriors Pelias, Telamon, and Hercules in battle, 'Uair bá lathrach leomain 7 bá neim nathrach[644] 7 bá comḟerg curad leo' ('For they had a lion's strength and a snake's venom and a hero's wrath') (*TTLL*, 645–46). A similar description is used to portray Achilles as he goes into battle with Hector:

> Ba fergg nathrach 7 ba bruth bíasta 7 ba lunni leomain 7 bá menma míled 7 ba comeirge curad 7 ba nert níad 7 bá lámach láich lais. (*TTLL*, 2034–36)
>
> He had a snake's anger, and a wild beast's fury, and a lion's wrath, and a soldier's spirit, and a champion's upheaving, and a warrior's strength, and a hero's hurling.

The author of *Imtheachta Aeniasa* also adopts this type of imagery when describing Aeneas's reaction to Pallas's death:

> Ba ferg nathrach ferg Aenias in tan sin. Ba bruth miled 7 ba luth leomain, ba gal curudh, ba nert niad, ba lamach laech lais. (*Imtheachta Aeniasa*, 2567–70).
>
> The wrath of a serpent was the wrath of Aeneas at that time. His was a soldier's spirit, and a lion's power, a hero's valour, a warrior's strength, a champion's shooting.

[643] See also **Chapter 3:3.3**.
[644] Stokes translates 'adder', I change to 'snake', see *eDIL* s.v. *nathair*.

It seems likely that the translator of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* drew on heroic epithets such as these from the Irish vernacular classical corpus to develop the imagery of Polynices and Eteocles in battle. It shows the translator's capacity for innovation that he chose to add the animals in their dual forms, echoing Statius's boars going head to head.

The inclusion of the tigers in the simile appears to show the creativity of the Irish translator, who was perhaps drawing on a simile of a tigress translated from the *Thebaid* Book II, which depicted Eteocles, ready to fight his brother, as 'amal thiger nemnig naimdigi' ('like a venomous hostile tiger') (*TnT*, 642–44). It is worth noting that the authors of the Middle Irish *Thebaid, Togail Troi* and *Imtheachta Aeniasa* all used alliteration to ornament their descriptions. This technique is shown to be well attested in other adaptations of classical epic in medieval Ireland as well as in the contemporary Middle Irish tales.[645]

The triad of similes depicting Polynices and Eteocles in combat does show the ferocity of their attack. In replacing Statius's simile with a string of his own, the translator has placed the reader, previously drawn into the simile as Statius's hunter, at a distance to what is happening in the narrative. Although the triad of Irish similes appears to offer a more objective view of the fight, the ferocity of the beasts included still emphasizes the danger of the situation. The reader can be left in no doubt that an act of fratricide is about to take place.

6.7 Combining techniques: depictions of Argia and Deiphyle

6.7.1 Blushing maidens: *Thebaid*, I. 535–36, cf. *TnT*, 479–82

In *Thebaid* Book I, after Adrastus invites Polynices and Tydeus into Argos and they have been made comfortable, the Argive king summons his daughters (I.533–34). Statius uses a simile to describe the two girls as they enter the room:

> mirabile visu,
> Pallados armisonae pharetrataeque ora Dianae
> aequa ferunt, terrore minus. (*Thebaid*, I.535–36)
>
> A wonder to behold, they bear faces matching armed Pallas' and quiver-bearing Diana's, all but the terror.

This simile was reworked to a brief description of the women in the Middle Irish narrative, which simply states, 'tangadar na hingina cæma comcosmaili sin isin tech' ('those lovely maidens perfectly alike came into that house') (*TnT*, 478–79). While the Irish author chose not

[645] Mac Gearailt, 'Change and Innovation', p. 488 and Poppe, *A New Introduction*, p. 20.

to translate Statius's simile with a simile, he was inspired by the following section of the poem to include a double simile of his own.

nova deinde pudori | visa virum facies: pariter pallorque ruborque | purpureas hausere genas, oculique verentes | ad sanctum rediere patrem. (*Thebaid*, I.536–39)	[U]a deirgither losa liac[646] gnuisi 7 aichthi na n-ingen sin, 7 ba baine linscoit lenead arna langlanad in fecht araill ri met na naire rogob iat ac sillead 7 faicsin na fear coem coimthech. (*TnT*, 479–82)
Then they saw men's visages, new to their bashful eyes. Pallor and blush together consumed their radiant cheeks, and their eyes in shame returned to their reverend sire.	[A]s red as foxgloves were the faces and countenances of those maidens, and at another time as white as the linen of a smock after a full cleansing at the greatness of the shame which seized them, as they glanced at and beheld the handsome foreign men.

Both Statius's simile and description focus on the modesty and chastity of Adrastus's daughters. They are placed in contrast to Adrastus's first sighting of Polynices and Tydeus when he interrupts their fight, 'lacera ora putresque \| sanquineo videt imbre genus' ('He sees torn faces and cheeks clotted with gory shower') (*Thebaid*, I.437–38). This imagery is translated closely in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, 'gnuis letarthach landerg co mbrænaib fola forgdeirgi forro' ('Their faces mangled and very red with drops of crimson blood upon them') (*TnT*, 414–15). While the men's faces are red from the blood shed during their fight, in contrast Adrastus's daughters blush red and white with shame having seen the men. In both the *Thebaid* and the Irish translation, the violence of Polynices and Tydeus's fight is set against the entrance made by Adrastus's modest and virginal daughters. In both versions of the tale, this intratextual link seems to hint at the violence that their future marriages will bring.[647]

In the Irish narrative Statius's use of *rubor* ('blush') and *pallor* ('paleness') were expanded to a double simile depicting the sisters's faces 'ua deirgither losa liuc' ('as red as foxgloves') (*TnT*, 479) and at another time, 'ba baine linscoit lenead arna langlanad' ('as white as the linen of a smock after a full cleansing') (*TnT*, 480). Statius's description appears to have presented the Irish author with an opportunity to use imagery with strong textual

[646] Calder translates *losa liac* 'eyebrights' (*TnT*, 479) which I change to 'foxgloves'. *Losa liac* is defined as a 'foxgloves' under both *eDIL* s.v. 1 *lus* (c) and *eDIL* s.v. 1 *lía*. The identification of the flower that *losa liac* refers to is problematic. The Irish author informs the reader in the simile that the *losa liac* are red in colour, however, the name literally translates as 'flowers of the stones', a name which, to the modern reader at least, does not obviously connect to the foxglove. In medieval Irish foxgloves are more commonly identified as *sían* or *sian slébi*, see *eDIL* s.v. 1 *sían*.

[647] See Vessey's observation on *Thebaid*, I.533–39, in Vessey, pp. 99–100. For the associations between virgins, sexuality, and death in Classical epic narratives, see Don Fowler, 'Vergil on Killing Virgins', in *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble*, ed. by Michael Whitby, Philip Hardie, and Mary Whitby (Bristol: Classical Press, 1987), pp. 185–98.

correspondences to Irish native narratives, where similar tropes comparing the colour of a character's cheeks are known from descriptive passages or poems depicting a character's appearance. For instance, a similar comparison appears in *Mesca Ulad* where the character Cromm Deróil describes the Ulster warrior Lóegure, 'Samalta ra corcair lossa liac no ra oíblib úrtheined a gnúis 7 a drech 7 a aged' ('Comparable to the purple of the foxglove or to embers of fresh fire, his visage and his face') (ll. 588–90).[648] Elsewhere, in an obscure poem found in the Book of Leinster (ll. 6775–90), Gormlaith, daughter of Flann, is described thus, 'a da grúad co ṅglanṡoilsi | co ndath losa líac' ('Her two cheeks with pure brightness so that [they were] the colour of foxgloves') (ll. 6781–82).[649]

Similes which use the more common medieval Irish word for *sían* or *sian slébi* to compare a character's cheeks to foxgloves are also found in a range of medieval Irish narratives. In *Torchmarc Étaíne*, Midir, the king of the Síde of Ériu, recites a poem to woo Étaíne into joining him in the Síde. He says of the people of the Síde, 'is dath síon and gach gruadh' ('Every cheek there is of the hue of a foxglove') (*Tochmarc Étaíne*, III. para. 10).[650] In *Tochmarc Ferbe* a double simile in the *túarascbal* ('description') of Maine appears as part of a longer description of the youth, 'Ba cosmail fri cléithe caille cétamain fri sían slébi cechtar a dá gruad' ('Each of his two cheeks was like the top of the forest in May or the foxglove on the mountain') (*Tochmarc Ferbe*, para. 3).[651] Poppe demonstrates how, in adapting a simile which characterises Evander's son, Pallas, from *Aeneid*, VIII.587–91 at *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, 1924–37 the redactor 'dramatically transformed and also expanded Virgil, by giving a long a rhetorically refined description of the appearance of Pallas and of his sword'.[652] This reworked passage, observed Poppe, has close analogues in other medieval Irish texts, such as *Scél na Fír Flatha* and *Tochmarc Feirbe*.[653] In fact, Rebecca Shercliff demonstrates that the *túarascbal*

[648] *Mesca Ulad*, ed. by J. Carmichael-Watson, Medieval and Modern Irish Series 13 (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1941). English translation from '*Mesca Ulad*', trans. by J. Carmichael-Watson, *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, 5 (1938), 1–34 (p. 19).
[649] *The Book of Leinster, Formerly Lebar Na Núachongbála*, ed. by Richard. I. Best, Osborn Bergin and M. A. O'Brien, 6 vols (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1954–67), I (1954). The English translation here is my own. These stanzas sit between two poems attributed to Dallán mac Móre, *ollam* to King Cerball mac Muirecáin of Leinster (reigned *c*. AD 885–909). The preceding poem at ll. 6695–6774 begins 'Cerball Currig cáem-Life' and focuses on the battles fought by Cerball, see, 'A Poem by Dallán mac Móre', ed. and trans. by Kuno Meyer, *Revue Celtique*, 29 (1908), 210–14. The following poem at ll. 6793–6876 begins 'Mochen, a chlaidib Cherbaill!' and is in praise of Cerball's sword, see 'The Song of the Sword of Cerball', ed. and trans. by Kuno Meyer, *Revue Celtique*, 20 (1899), 7–12.
[650] All citations and English translations from *Tochmarc Étaíne*, ed. and trans. by Osborn Bergin and R. I. Best, *Ériu*, 12 (1938), 137–96.
[651] *Torcmarc Ferbe*, ed. by Ernst Windisch, *CELT*, < https://celt.ucc.ie//> [Accessed 25/02/2018], para. 3, p. 464.
[652] Poppe, '*Imtheachta Aeniasa*', p. 82.
[653] Poppe, '*Imtheachta Aeniasa*', p. 83.

of Maine is almost an exact replica of the one which depicts Pallas in *Imtheachta Aeniasa* and includes the similes, 'Ba cosmail ri forcleithi cailli cetemuin no fri sian slebi cectar a dha gruadh' ('Like the prime of the wood in May, or like the the purple foxglove was each of his two cheeks') (*Imtheachta Aeniasa*, 1925–27).[654] Shercliff observes that it difficult to know which text borrowed which, but argues that it is possible that the text in *Imtheachta Aeniasa* was the model for both the analogous descriptions in *Tochmarc Ferbe* and *Scél na Fír Flatha*.[655]

The foxglove similes in the paragraph above all relate to descriptions of men, however, they are also attested in descriptions of women. Of particular relevance to this discussion is *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga* where the character Étain is subject to an extensive *ecphrasis* in her introduction at the beginning of the tale (§2).[656] O'Connor notes that 'The first part of this passage is rightly famed as the finest and most detailed description of a woman in mediaeval Irish literature.'[657] The passage includes similes contrasting the colour of Étain's skin:

> Is and buí oc taithbiuch a fuilt dia folcud 7 a dá láim tria derc a sedlaig immach. Batar gilithir sneachta n-óen-aiche na dí dóit[658] 7 batar maethchóiri 7 batar dergithir sían slébe na dá grúad n-glanáilli. Badar duibithir druimne daeil na dá malaich. Batar inand 7 frais do némannaib a déta ina cind. Batar glasithir buga na dí shúil. Batar dergithir partaing na beóil. Batar forarda míne maethgela na dá gúalaind. Batar gelglana sithṁota na méra. Batar fota na láma. Ba gilithir úan tuindi in taeb seṅg fota tláith mín maeth amal olaind. Batar teithbláithi sleamongeala na dí ślíasait. Batar cruindbega caladgela na dí glún. Batar gerrgela indildírgi na dé lurgain. Batar coirdírgi íaráildi na dá sáil. Cid ríagail fo-certa forsna traigthib is ing m'ad-chotad égoir n-indib acht ci tórmaisead feóil ná fortche foraib. (*Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*, §2.1-14)
>
> There she was, undoing her hair to wash it, with her arms out through the sleeve-holes of her smock. White as the snow of one night were the two upper arms, soft and even, and red as foxglove were the two clear-beautiful cheeks. Dark as the back of a stag-beetle the two eyebrows. Like a shower of pearls were the teeth in her head. Blue as a hyacinth were the eyes. Red as rowan-berries the lips. Very high, smooth and soft-white the shoulders. Clear-white and lengthy the fingers. Long were the hands. White as the foam of a wave was the flank, slender, long, tender, smooth, soft as wool. Polished and warm, sleek and white [were] the two thighs. Round and small, hard and

[654] Rebecca Shercliff, 'Textual Correspondences in *Tochmarc Ferbe*', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 35 (2015), pp. 187–203 (pp. 197–99). See also Meyer, 'The Middle-Irish Version of the *Aeneid*', p. 101 and Poppe, *A New Introduction*, p. 24. Useful observations on Hector's *túarascbal* in *TTLL*, 1555–58 can also be found in Myrick, pp. 149–50.
[655] Shercliff, pp. 199–202.
[656] See also Cathbad's prophecy following foetus-Deirdre's shout, 'Sian a grúade gorm-chorcrai' ('Foxglove her purple-scarlet cheeks') (*Longes mac nUislenn*, l. 34). For analysis on Cathbad's description of Deirdre see Sarah Sheehan, 'Feasts for the Eyes: Visuality and Desire in the Ulster Cycle', in *Gablánach in scélaigecht*, ed. by Sheehan, Findon, and Follett, pp. 95–113 (pp. 101–02).
[657] O'Connor, *The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel*, p. 57.
[658] Stokes translates as 'the two hands', which I change to 'the two upper arms', see *eDIL* s.v. 1 *doé*.

> white the two knees. Short and white and rulestraight the two shins. Justly straight, [...] and beautiful the two heels. If a measure were put on the feet it would hardly have found them unequal, unless the flesh of the coverings should grow upon them.

Although the foxglove simile at *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*, §2.3-4 employs the word *sían* for 'foxglove', the author included the redness of the foxglove as part of his simile, a detail which the author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* also included, and which does not appear in other similes of this type in medieval Irish literature. Therefore, it may be that the author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* drew on his knowledge of *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga* for his inspiration.

There is further suggestion of textual correspondence between the ecphrasis of Étain and the simile depicting Argia and Deipyle. Étain's cheeks are mentioned again later in this passage, where it is said:

> Tibri ániusa ceachtar a dá grúad, co n-amlud indtibsen do ballaib bithchorcra co n-deirgi fola laíg, 7 araill eile co solusgili sneachta. (*Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*, §2.17-18)

> A dimple of delight in each of her cheeks, with an alteration[659] in them at one time of purple spots with redness of a calf's blood, and at another with the bright lustre of snow.

The nuance of the imagery in this second passage, that Étain's cheeks alternate in colour between red and white, is like that used by the author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* where red and white colour of Argia and Deipyle's cheeks also alternates (*TnT*, 479). While there is no direct textual correspondence here, it seems possible that the Irish translator of the *Thebaid* drew on this passage or his wider knowledge of the trope in medieval Irish native narratives in his creative illustration of Argia and Deipyle's cheeks.

Another possibility should also be considered. Conceptually, there is a similarity between the simile depicting the Argia and Deipyle's cheeks to a type of simile which appears in classical epic.[660] For instance, in Virgil's *Aeneid* Lavinia's face is described with a simile, which reflects this type of imagery, as she listens to her mother plead with Turnus, her husband to be, not to go into battle:

> accepit vocem lacrimis Lavinia matris
> flagrantis perfusa genas, cui plurimus ignem
> subiecit rubor et calefacta per ora cucurrit.
> Indum sanguineo veluti violaverit ostro

[659] Stokes provides *amlud* without translation. See *eDIL* s.v. *amlad*.
[660] See Virgil, *Aeneid*, XII.64–69, Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, IV.329–33 and Statius, *Achilleid*, I.307–10. In the latter two examples the blushing figures are male.

> si quis ebur, aut mixta rubent ubi lilia multa
> alba rosa, talis virgo dabat ore colores. (*Aeneid*, XII.64–69)
>
> Lavinia heard her mother's words, her burning cheeks steeped in tears, while a deep blush kindled its fire, and mantled her glowing face. As when someone stains Indian ivory with crimson dye, or white lilies blush when mingled with many a rose - such hues her maiden features showed.

Perhaps the author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* was aware of this simile, or a similar model from the classical corpus.[661]

The vivid contrast of red and white in a personal description is by no means limited to female figures in medieval Irish literature. In *Táin Bó Fraích*, Ailill asks Fráech to swim across a river to retrieve a branch of rowan berries from a tree on the other side.[662] Aillil's daughter, Finnabair, who is already in an erotic relationship with Fráech, watches him as he swims back across the river with the branch of rowan berries:

> Ba hed íarum athesc Findabrach, nach álaind ad·chíd, ba háildiu lee Fróech do acsin tar dublind, in corp do rogili 7 in folt do roáilli, ind agad do cumtachtai, int ṡúil do roglassi, os é móethóclach cen locht cen anim, co n-aiged ḟochaél forlethain, os é díriuch dianim, in chráeb cosna cáeraib derggaib eter in mbrágit 7 in n-agid ngil. Is ed as·berad Findabair: 'Nicon·acca ní ro·ṡáised leth nó trían dia chruth.' (*Táin Bó Froích*, 181–86)[663]
>
> This was Finnabair's response therafter whenever she would see anything beautiful, that it was more beautiful to her to see Froech (swimming) the blackpool, the body of extreme whiteness, the hair of extreme beauty, the face for shapeliness, the eyes shining blue, and he a gentle youth without fault, without blemish, with face narrow below, broad above, and he straight and flawless, the branch with the red berries between the throat and the white face. This is what Finnabair used to say: 'Never have I seen anything which would have reached half or one third of his beauty.'

Sarah Sheehan observes how Finnabair's gaze 'finally rests on the red berries between his throat and face, registering the contrast between pale skin and red fruit as the greatest source of visual pleasure'.[664]

While the contrast of red and white skin and the foxglove simile is attested on several occasions in native medieval Irish narratives, the simile depicting Argia and Deipyle's skin as

[661] Further discussion on the imitation of similes from Classical epic in medieval Irish adaptations can be found in, Miles, *Heroic Saga*, pp. 131–39.
[662] This is part of a rather elaborate plot to kill Fráech, as Aillil and Medb do not want him to marry their daughter Finnabair and there happens to be a monster living in the river.
[663] *The romance of Froech and Findabair, or, The driving of Froech's cattle: Táin bó Froích*, ed. and trans. in German with commentary by Wolfgang Meid, ed. and trans. in English by Albert Bock, Benjamin Bruch and Aaron Griffith, Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft, Neue Folge 10 (Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachen und Literaturen der Universität Innsbruck, 2015).
[664] Sheehan, 'Feasts for the Eyes', p. 101.

being ‘ba baine linscoit lenead arna langlanad’ (‘as white as the linen of a smock after a full cleansing’) (*TnT*, 480) appears to be quite unique.[665] However, a similar image does reappear again in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. In text corresponding to *Thebaid*, IX.36–41 where Statius describes Polynices’ reaction to the news of Tydeus’s death without any similes, the Irish author included a string of three:

> Et gid ed o cualaig-sium a deimin, rosocht fair coma cruaidhither re crandlaem[666] gach n-alt 7 gach n-aigi de o chind co bond 7 robanad imi mar scoith-[sh]eamair no mar lenid ar na lantuar. (*TnT*, 3363–66)
>
> And yet when he heard the certainty of it, silence fell on him so that every joint and every muscle from head to sole became as hard as a handstaff, and he blanched like a flowering clover, or like a fully bleached smock.

Statius depicts Polynices freezing when he hears the news of Tydeus’s death, ‘deriguit iuvenis’ (‘The young man froze’) (*Thebaid*, IX.36) and it is this image that appears to be recalled in the Irish simile of Polynices’ physically stiffening so that he is as hard as a handstaff (*TnT*, 3364–65). The two other similes in the Irish narrative here also appear to have been inspired by Statius’s text. The similes comparing Polynices to a blanched clover flower or a fully bleached smock are a creative reimagining of the phrase ‘tum sanguine fixo’ (‘His blood is stopped’) (*Thebaid*, IX.40). The simile depicting Polynices as ‘mar lenid ar na lantuar’ (‘like a fully bleached smock’) (*TnT*, 3365–66) is very close to the one used to portray the white colour of Argia and Deipyle’s cheeks, ‘ba baine linscoit lenead arna langlanad’ (‘as white as the linen of a smock after a full cleansing’) (*TnT*, 480). It may be that the translator intended this analogous simile as an allusion to the earlier simile in order to draw the reader’s attention to the vivid contrast of Argia and Deipyle’s purity at the start of the tale and the horrific consequences of their respective marriages to Polynices and Tydeus.

6.7.2 Incomparable maidens, *Thebaid*, II.236–43, cf. *TnT*, 728–35

The *ecphrasis* of Étain above fits in with the teaching of twelfth-century rhetoricians who Dorothy Dilts Swartz notes ‘emphasized the description of persons and provided examples supporting the theory that the correct sequence in listing physical characteristics was from

[665] I have not located a comparable simile in medieval Irish native narratives to date. In Early Modern Irish classical verse, a variant of this simile appears in the inaugeration ode to Cathal Croibhdhearg (†1224), *Táinig an Croibhdhearg go Cruachain*, see Damian McManus, ‘Good-Looking and Irresistible: the hero from Early Irish Saga to Classical Poetry’, *Ériu*, 59 (2009), 57–109 (p. 79).
[666] Calder translates ‘as hard as a handstaff of a kiln’. I change to ‘as hard as a handstaff’ as I can find no textual evidence that this relates to a kiln.

head to foot'.[667] This rhetorical approach may account for another depiction of Argia and Deipyle in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. In the *Thebaid* Book II, as Argia and Deipyle prepare for their wedding day, Statius includes a simile comparing them to Pallas and Diana. This was reworked into a description in the Irish vernacular narrative:

non secus ac supero pariter si cardine lapsae | Pallas et asperior Phoebi soror, utraque telis, | utraque torva genis flavoque in vertice nodo, | illa suas Cyntho comites agat, haec Aracyntho; | tunc, si fas oculis, non umquam longa tuendo | expedias, cui maior honos, cui gratior, aut plus | de Iove; mutatosque velint transumere cultus, | et Pallas deceat pharetras et Delias cristas. (*Thebaid*, II.236–43)	Oir ni rabadar ar tuind talman in tan sin da ingin uad ind–rucu andat sin. Air is amlaid batar–sum, cendchaema cosmaile sulglasa saineamla gruadchorcra gribglana[668] belchorcra banamla detgela dianim lamgela laichthecha co sliastaib semidib, co colpthaib cumaidib, co traigthib tenaidib, so salaib sarchruindi. Cid tra acht gid fata robeth fer fiamach firglic ac mideamain na n-ingen sin, ni fhitir ca ragu doberad dib ara caime 7 ara cosmaili. (*TnT*, 728–35)
It was as though Pallas and Phoebus' sterner sister, both grim of weapons and of eye, blond braid upon their heads, were to glide together from the sky above leading their companions, the one from Cynthus, the other from Aracynthus; then could you never by long gazing (were your eyes permitted) determine which had the grander grace, which the more charming, which had more of Jupiter. And should they wish to change dress with each other, Pallas would beseem the quiver and Delia the helmet crest.	For there were not on earth's surface at that time two maidens that were more worthy than those. For thus were they with beautiful heads alike, grey-eyed, distinguished, crimson-cheeked, fine and bright, crimson-lipped, womanly, with white teeth, stainless, white-handed, high bred, with fine thighs, shapely calves, slender feet, and finely rounded heels. So, though a modest shrewd man were long contemplating those maidens he would not know what choice he should make between them owing to their beauty and similarity.

The simile in the *Thebaid* recalls the poet's earlier comparison from *Thebaid*, I.535–36. Gervais's commentary on Statius's text here provides a useful overview of this allusion:

> The fierceness of Pallas and Diana is downplayed by both critics and defenders of the simile (e.g. Mulder and [Shackleton Bailey] n. 27 *ad loc*.), but the simile is so obviously discordant with [Statius's] presentation of the timid, blushing brides [...] that it is inadvisable to discount the intentional irony (also quite clear at 1. 536 'terrore minus'): the simile is perhaps [Statius's] strongest hint - aside from the impending omen (249ff.) - at the disastrous martial consequences of the Adrastides' marriage.[669]

[667] Dorothy Dilts Swartz, 'The Beautiful Women and the Warriors in the "LL TBC" and Twelfth-Century Neo-Classical Rhetoric', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 5 (1985), pp. 128–46 (p. 130).
[668] Calder translates as 'bright-fingered', but I suggest that 'fine and bright' may be better, see *eDIL* s.v. *gríbda* and *eDIL* s.v. *glan*.
[669] Gervais, *Statius. Thebaid 2*, p. 153.

Statius's simile simultaneously recalls the earlier meeting of the women with Polynices and Tydeus and implies the devastating effect of their union to these men. It is, therefore, a highly subjective description.

In contrast the description of the women in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* is more objective in tone. As demonstrated above, the author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* chose not to translate the simile at *Thebaid*, I.535–36 closely and provided an interpretation of the imagery depicted through Statius's simile instead. He made a similar choice in reworking the simile at *Thebaid*, II.236–43, as a detailed description of Argia and Deipyle's beauty, which follows the sequence of listing physical characteristics from head to foot. By omitting the simile depicting Pallas and Diana, the Irish translator removed also the sense of irony from the allusion. The translator's stylistic choice here, in providing a description rather than a simile, may reveal that he was following the rhetorical expectations for this type of *ecphrasis* in contemporary literature, or that he had in mind a model from Irish native narratives, such as the description of Étain in *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*. Swartz explores the possibility that depictions of beautiful women and warriors in *TBC-LL* were influenced by classical models, again reminding the modern scholar of the complexities surrounding the development of imagery in medieval Irish narratives.[670]

Perhaps the most striking aspect about the reworking of Statius's simile from *Thebaid*, II.236–43, is that while lines 236–39 were lost entirely to reworking in the Middle Irish text (*TnT*, 728–32), lines 240–43 were translated very closely in concept. In the *Thebaid*, Statius states:

> tunc, si fas oculis, non umquam longa tuendo
> expedias, cui maior honos, cui gratior, aut plus
> de Iove. (*Thebaid*, II.240–43)
>
> Then could you never by long gazing (were your eyes permitted) determine which had the grander grace, which the more charming, which had more of Jupiter.

In the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, the sentiment is echoed:

> Cid tra acht gid fata robeth fer fiamach firglic ac mideamain na n-ingen sin, ni fhitir ca ragu doberad dib ara caime 7 ara cosmaili. (*TnT*, 733–35)
>
> So though a modest shrewd man were long contemplating those maidens he would not know what choice he should make between them owing to their beauty and similarity.

[670] Swartz, 'Beautiful Women', p. 129.

Statius's simile invites interaction with the reader by placing them in the position of looking at the two maidens (*expedias*, *Thebaid*, II.241). In contrast, the Middle Irish version distances the reader from the description and depicts a modest shrewd man contemplating the women's beauty instead. In reworking Statius's description in this way, the translator can be seen to have opted for a more objective view of the predicament presented by the poet. The inclusion of this translation of the second part of Statius's simile does, however, complement the Irish author's *ecphrasis* of Argia and Deipyle by emphasising how beautiful the women are. Although the Irish translation reimagines Argia and Deipyle within medieval Irish literary expectations of beauty and Statius's irony is lost here, their beauty is not unproblematic. Soon enough, Argia's beauty and purity will be tarnished by the gift of Harmonia's necklace, the cause of so many of the troubles at Argos and Thebes (*TnT*, 752–827, cf. *Thebaid*, II.265–305).[671]

6.8 Conclusion

In the close readings of the similes translated from the *Thebaid* into the Middle Irish narrative discussed above, we can see the Irish author's varied approaches to rendering similes into the vernacular narrative. While the term close translation can be used to describe the transmission of similes which retain their original comparison in some form, the translated similes do not necessarily preserve Statius's subjective programme.

The use of commentary material to interpret some of Statius's similes implies that interpretation was often the priority for the Irish author in rendering similes from the epic into the vernacular prose; an approach idenitified in other examples of the translator's style throughout this study. This technique is exemplified by the translation of the simile of Enceladus, where the translator provides extensive background information to aid the reader's understanding of the simile, before reiterating the simile to the reader. Descriptive interpretations can also be seen to be indicative of this interpretative, and subsequently objective, approach to translation.

Finally, the translator's creative response to both replacing Statian similes and his ability to develop new ones within the Middle Irish *Thebaid* seems to demonstrate his wider knowledge of similes in the medieval Irish classical corpus, such as *Togail Troí*, and native narratives, such as *Táin Bó Cúailnge*. The artistry with which the translator adapted Statius's similes and descriptive narrative into original imagery in the Irish vernacular suggests that he

[671] See **Chapter 4:8**.

drew on stylistic tropes from across classical and medieval literary narratives and did so with considerable thought and consideration for his subject matter.

Conclusion

In rendering Statius's *Thebaid* into Middle Irish the primary intentions of the translator appear to have been to produce an historical narrative that fitted into a wider knowledge of Greek history and to form a tale which, using exegesis and Irish vernacular literary techniques, made this complex epic accessible to a contemporary medieval audience. The translation was developed as part of a wider programme of classical adaptation in medieval Ireland. It can also be seen to reflect the *Thebaid*'s manuscript tradition and its associated commentary tradition; and it showcases the extensive range of literary techniques employed by the Irish author in developing this narrative. For modern scholars, the Middle Irish *Thebaid* can offer opportunities to build upon their understanding of medieval Irish literature through the Irish translator's craft and methodology. Contrary to the thoughts of Calder's early reviewers, this Irish vernacular *Thebaid* can offer Classicists ways to look again at Statius's style and artistry in writing his epic.

It is intended that this thesis should provide a foundation for scholars across different disciplines who wish to work on the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and also that it will add to the growing body of research into the development of classical translation and adaptation narratives in medieval Ireland. From the research produced during this study, it seems that there were extensive influences on the development of the Middle Irish translation of Statius's *Thebaid*. The transmission of the *Thebaid* and its associated tradition have proved to be of utmost importance to the reception of the epic in medieval Ireland - an insight which I believe can greatly assist modern scholars in understanding better how medieval Irish scholars read the narrative.

In this study, discussions around the transmission of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* have reflected not only on the material available to the Irish author in his exemplar but also on the transmission of the translation to the present day. This thesis began with an investigation into Calder's use of the title *Togail na Tebe* for his edition. While titular rubrics are known for the titles of *Togail Troí* and *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, the Middle Irish *Thebaid* demonstrably lacks a title in the surviving manuscripts. Calder's titular construction has led modern scholars to confidently discuss the narrative in the context of the *togla* genre from medieval Irish tale-lists; an association which I argue lacks firm evidence. Consequently, modern scholars should err on the side of caution and avoid making connections based on the fictitious title *Togail na Tebe*. However, there is scope for further study into the use of the interpretative phrase *togail na Tebe* and its variations, which recur throughout the Middle Irish *Thebaid*.

The influence of the transmission of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* text through the fourteenth to fifteenth-century manuscripts has also had a considerable impact on the way in which the narrative is read. At each stage of transmission, it is possible to see how authors reading the narrative have brought their own understanding to it. The Middle Irish *Thebaid* was not a static text in the late medieval period: the inclusion of *Scél an Mundtuirc* in the manuscript Adv.MS.72.1.8 and the addition of this and other interpolated material in Egerton 1781 and TCD 1298, demonstrate that the late medieval Irish scribes copying the text were also authors and adaptors in their own right. The loss of text through lacunae in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*'s manuscript tradition has the potential to influence our reading of the narrative and ought therefore to be taken in account when discussing the narrative. It is impossible to know what choices the translator made in these lost sections.

In contrast, the sections added to the translation do provide us with considerable evidence of what the author's intentions may have been in developing this narrative. The inclusion of an historical prologue at the outset of the tale, providing the history of Cadmus and Oedipus, is a feature which recalls the historical prologues in other classical adaptations from medieval Ireland, such as *Togail Troí* and *Imtheachta Aeniasa*. This prologue, combined with evidence that the translator reordered episodes in the narrative to reflect an *ordo naturalis*, strongly supports the argument that the Middle Irish *Thebaid* was developed as an historical narrative. Thus, it seems very likely to me that medieval Irish scholars viewed the epic as an historical account of the Theban war rather than as a poetic fiction.

This view of the Theban narrative does not appear to have been limited to the twelfth-century translator and aspects of compilation in the manuscript Adv.MS.72.1.8 suggest that the Middle Irish *Thebaid* may have been viewed by late medieval scholars as a precursor to the Trojan narrative, *Togail Troí*. That classical adaptations were viewed by medieval scholars as historical narratives is also attested in the Book of Ballymote, where *Togail Troí*, *Merugud Uilixis*, *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, and the history of Alexander were all grouped together. Additional material in the Egerton 1781 and TCD 1298 manuscripts linking Polynices' son, Thersander, to the Trojan war also appears to support the concept that late medieval scholars considered the Theban narrative to be historical.

The addition of a historical prologue to the Middle Irish translation of the *Thebaid* also helps us to understand the needs of the medieval reader in interpreting Statius's poem. By providing the historical background to the troubled city of Thebes, the conflict between Polynices and Eteocles was set in the context of the wider history of the city: a narrative which Statius deliberately avoided. The information can also be seen to form a type of *accessus* to

the narrative and implies the Irish author's knowledge of and engagement with the *accessus* tradition within medieval rhetorical practice.

It is even possible that the historical prologue to the Middle Irish *Thebaid* has its roots in an *accessus* or a mythological preface in the translator's exemplar. Although the literary material used to develop the history of Cadmus for this prologue can be traced to Ovid's epic *Metamorphoses*, it seems likely that this material was included in the prefatory material to the exemplar which the Irish author worked from, rather than a copy of the *Metamorphoses* itself. This may also have been the case for the history of Oedipus, which is well attested in other medieval sources, such as VM II, 230. These narratives detailing the history of Oedipus are remarkably similar and it seems possible that they were developed from a shared ancestor. However, the retelling of the Riddle of the Sphinx at *TnT*, 157–70 hints that the Irish author may have had access to a different variant of this tale to that used by VM II. Through this variant, the Middle Irish *Thebaid* stands apart from the continental medieval Theban tradition in the Old French *Roman de Thèbes* and its derivatives.

Similarities between the Irish vernacular narrative *Aided Óenfir Aífe* and the history of Oedipus in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* also seem to imply that the author of the latter saw some resonance between these tales. The range of literary material which may have contributed towards the development of the historical prologue in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* can provide the modern scholar with some sense of the range of texts to which medieval Irish authors had access. It also highlights that this translation was not produced without considerable complementary reading and understanding. The reception of the *Thebaid* in the Middle Irish vernacular was by no means not limited to the original poem.

There was a considerable cultural difference between the learned environment in which Statius imagined his epic being read to that in which the medieval writers and readers received it. In the *Thebaid*, Statius makes constant allusion to other mythological narratives which he expected his reader to know. However, by the medieval period, these references had frequently became unintelligible to the reader. Consequently, explanatory material for these references and allusions was provided where the translator considered exegesis to be necessary.

This aspect of the *Thebaid*'s reception in the Middle Irish translation is well attested in the inclusion of material from Lactantius's late antique commentary on the *Thebaid*. From the supplementary material provided in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*, it is evident that, either directly or indirectly, the Irish author was able to draw on information available in Lactantius's commentary to interpret the *Thebaid*. For example, the development of the background to Harmonia's necklace in the Irish vernacular version demonstrates the consistency with which

elements of Lactantius's commentary were used to interpret Statius's complex descriptions and allusions. The use of commentary material to translate Statius's complex poem and render it into the Irish vernacular, underscores the translator's engagement with the grammatical practice of *enarratio poetarum*.

Like other medieval translators using this technique, the Irish author created his narrative by combining his source narrative with learned scholia on it. By doing so, he created a translation which included supplementary information as part of the main narrative. These sections of additional material in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* are not simple reproductions of Lactantius's commentary, however. An example such as the Calydonian boar and Meleager's death at *TnT*, 346–65 (cf. *ISTC*, I.1275–98) highlights as many differences as it does similarities to Lactantius's *fabula* on the Calydonian boar hunt. The Irish retelling demonstrates the diversity and creativity with which these narratives could be rendered into the vernacular text through the technique of *amplificatio*. Here, the translator became an exegete himself, producing new variant readings from previous accounts.

The translator's role as interpreter is evident in the changes he made to the *materia* of the *Thebaid* and the decisions he made as to what was necessary to include in the narrative and what was not. Subjective aspects of Statius's style, such as his narratorial apostrophes, are consistently removed or abbreviated in the Middle Irish version. Statius's moralizing apostrophes are all omitted. Where apostrophes are revised, rather than cut, the *materia* which is transferred is reduced to essential plot information, creating a more objective tone to the narrative.

Similarly, speeches from the *Thebaid* are frequently abbreviated or cut in the Irish vernacular. The use of paraphrase to render speeches not only produces shorter speeches in the Irish, but the translator appears to have used these reworkings to alter the reader's understanding of the epic. This process can be seen in both the treatment of Jupiter's speech at *TnT*, 2624–29 and the omission of Dis's speech at *Thebaid*, VIII.69–77. The Irish author constantly recomposed episodes from the *Thebaid*, an approach which suggests that he needed to modify concepts to render the narrative more accessible to the contemporary audience of medieval Ireland.

Accessibility as a guiding principle can also be seen in the ways in which the translator approached micro aspects of the poet's style. The Middle Irish translator provided constant clarification and standardisation in rendering Statius's Greek patronymics, forenames, geographical epithets and deities. He also consistently clarified references to Greek and Theban characters. It seems likely that where Statius's naming strategies became an obstacle to the medieval reader's understanding of the Theban narrative the Irish author altered these

references to make them more intelligible to his contemporary audience. The translator appears to have operated with an awareness of the exegetical format he imposed on his narrative as explanatory notes using the reference *id est* often appear in direct speech or interrupt a section of descriptive narrative and add to a sense of objectivity in the tale.

Thus, the need to ensure that the narrative was understood by the medieval reader constantly took priority over the dramatic movement of Statius's epic. This appropriation of the narrative can partly be understood as a reaction to the complexity of the language and use of allusion which pervades the *Thebaid*. For both medieval and modern translators alike, the *Thebaid* is a challenging read, and there are examples where the epic's modern English translators, such as Shackleton Bailey, have employed similar interpretative techniques as the medieval Irish translator (e.g. *Thebaid*, I.567, cf. *TnT*, 499–501).

The translation and development of similes in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* provides an excellent opportunity to study the types of techniques which the Irish author used to develop this narrative. A varied approach is taken to translating Statius's similes and includes non-translation of similes, close translation, close translation with commentary material, descriptive interpretation, descriptive interpretation with commentary material, and the inclusion of new similes based on a Statian simile or descriptive narrative from the epic. The Middle Irish author was incredibly versatile in the techniques he employed in render these into the vernacular narrative. The example of Dymas and the lioness (*Thebaid*, X.414–19; cf. *TnT*, 4017–19) demonstrates that within an example of close translation, the author abbreviated the simile and brought in concepts from the preceding lines of the poem. Where the Irish author elaborated upon Statius's simile depicting Tyrrhenian waters and Enceladus (*Thebaid*, III.594–97; cf. *TnT*, 1284–1301) the poet's original simile is almost entirely eclipsed by the exegesis of how Enceladus came to be under the three mountains of Sicily. It is so long, that the translator felt the need to reiterate the concept of the simile before returning to the main narrative. This translation perhaps gives one of the best examples of the extent to which the Irish author might find it necessary to rely on additional material to ensure the reader's understanding of a Statian simile. It may also, therefore, help to explain why so many of Statius's similes were left out of the translation; for if similes required such extensive explanation, it is understandable that the translator might choose to omit them, especially if supplementary information on that simile was unavailable.

The use of the simile 'amar scaith sciath sciach' ('like the bristling defence of a hawthorn') (*TnT*, 928–29; cf. *Thebaid*, II.544) and the development of the similes to describe Argia and Deipyle at *TnT*, 479–82 (cf. *Thebaid*, I.536–39) demonstrate how the Irish author could use Statius's descriptive narrative to form new similes. These new similes appear to

recall imagery, and often other similes, from vernacular Irish narratives, such as *Táin Bó Cúailnge*. In this way, the Irish translator can be seen to be actively engaging with the wider corpus of literature known to him. By adding similes which contained familiar imagery or formats to that in medieval Irish literature, it seems likely that the author intended to make the Middle Irish *Thebaid* more accessible to contemporary readers.

The reception of the *Thebaid* in the Middle Irish translation is a tale of transmission and interpretation. Modern scholars are already aware of the importance of 'classical studies' on medieval Irish literature: a concept Miles highlights in his influencial monograph *Heroic Saga*. His study shows the extent to which *Togail Troí* and *Táin Bó Cúailnge* may both have benefitted from the classical learnings of medieval scholars who wrote, and continued to develop, these narratives in medieval Ireland. Punzi's study on the use of scholia in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* and the *Roman de Thèbes* highlights how medieval scholars drew on learned scholia from the *Thebaid*'s manuscript and commentary tradition. My study draws on these works to highlight the level of classical scholarship which the medieval Irish translator of the *Thebaid* operated. This study also goes further than previous research, demonstrating how integral supplementary information from the *Thebaid*'s manuscript tradition, including the commentary of Lactantius, was to the development of the Middle Irish *Thebaid*.

Poppe's research on the historical prologue to *Imtheachta Aeniasa* and Clarke's on the extended prologue to *Togail Troí* demonstrate how these classical adaptation narratives were developed and viewed as historical accounts. The translator of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* appears to have had similar historical interests to the scholars who adapted Virgil's *Aeneid* and pseudo-Dares' *De Excidio Troiae Historia* into medieval Irish. Thus, the translation of the *Thebaid* into Middle Irish was very much part of the wider interest in Greek historical narratives in medieval Ireland.

The translation of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* too reflects the conventions of native medieval Irish literature. The translator followed the convention of translating in a prose style which is more linear than Statius's complex verse. The poet's subjective interjections were omitted, producing a more objective view of the events in the Theban war. For the author of the Middle Irish *Thebaid* to have worked through Statius's Theban narrative, reworking it using scholastic material on the *Thebaid* and drawing on native medieval Irish narrative conventions, was a considerable achievement. Overall, the Middle Irish *Thebaid* demonstrates the literary versatility, skill, and learning of the translator in conveying Statius's epic into medieval Irish literature.

Appendix I

Comparison of speeches from Statius's *Thebaid* and the Middle Irish *Thebaid*[672]

Thebaid	Lines of Verse	Type of Speech	Addressor(s)	Addressee(s)	*TnT*	Lines of prose	Direct/ Indirect speech
I. 56–87	32	Prayer	Oedipus	Underworld gods	153–70, 171–80	26	Direct speech
I. 173–97	24 1/3	Praise/ Blame	A Theban	Thebans, Jupiter	227–32	5	Direct speech
I. 214–47	34	Forensic Oration	Jupiter	Olympian gods	576–78	2	Indirect speech
I. 250–82	32 7/12	Forensic Oration	Juno	Jupiter	578–79	2	Indirect speech
I. 285–302	16 3/4	Command	Jupiter	Juno, Mercury	579–84	5	Indirect speech
I. 410–11	1	Indirect speech	Polynices	Tydeus	372–73	1	Direct speech
I. 410–11	1	Indirect speech	Tydeus	Polynices	373–75	2	Direct speech
I. 438–46	8 5/12	Question	Adrastus	Tydeus and Polynices	416–18, 419–22	7	Direct speech
I. 448–50	1 3/4	Responsion	Tydeus and Polynices	Adrastus	423–24	1	Direct speech
I. 452–65	13	Responsion	Tydeus	Adrastus	424–31	7	Direct speech
I. 465	3/4	Responsion	Polynices	Adrastus	432	1	Direct speech
1. 468–73	5 5/12	Deliberation	Adrastus	Polynices and Tydeus	436–43	7	Direct speech
I. 498–510	12 7/12	Prayer	Adrastus	Nox, Fortuna	453–54	2	Indirect speech
I. 514–15	2	Indirect speech	Adrastus	Adrastus's household	458–59	1	Direct speech
I. 557–672	115 5/6	Narration	Adrastus	Tydeus and Polynices	491–554, 556–59	67	Direct speech
cf. I.557		No trace	Tydeus and Polynices	Adrastus	491	0.5	Direct speech

[672] The list of speeches from the *Thebaid* is developed from Dominik, *Speech and Rhetoric*, 'Statistical Appendix 2', pp. 295–311. The references from the Irish text are from my own research.

Appendix I

Thebaid	**Lines of Verse**	**Type of Speech**	**Addressor(s)**	**Addressee(s)**	***TnT***	**Lines of prose**	**Direct/ Indirect speech**
cf. I.557		No trace	Adrastus	Tydeus and Polynices	489–90	2	Direct speech (Question)
cf. I.643		DN[673]	Apollo	Coroebus	548–49	1	Direct speech
I. 643–61	19	Prayer	Coroebus	Apollo	550–52	2	Direct speech
I. 676–81	5 7/12	Responsion	Polynices	Adrastus	561–65	5	Direct speech
I. 682–720	37 7/12	Prayer	Adrastus	Polynices, Apollo	567–72, 72–74	5	Direct speech
II. 19–25	6 5/6	Apostrophe	A shade	Laius	cf. 592–95		No trace
II. 102–19	18	Deliberation	Ghost of Laius/Tiresias	Eteocles	625–34	10	Direct speech
II. 152–72	21	Deliberation	Adrastus	Tydeus and Polynices	655–66	12	Direct speech
II. 176–88	12 1/4	Responsion	Tydeus	Adrastus	670–75	6	Direct speech
II. 189–97	8 5/12	Responsion	Polynices	Adrastus	676–81	6	Direct speech
II. 334–52	17 11/12	Question	Argia	Polynices			*Lacuna*[674]
II. 356–62	7	Responsion	Polynices	Argia			*Lacuna*
		N/A	Juno	Semele	779–80	2	Direct speech
II. 393–409	17	Deliberation	Tydeus	Eteocles	830	1	Indirect speech
II. 415–51	36 5/12	Responsion	Eteocles	Tydeus	831–33, 833–45	15	Indirect speech & Direct speech
II. 452–67	14 1/12	Threats	Tydeus	Eteocles	847–64	18	Direct speech
II. 535	5/6	Question	Tydeus	Theban warriors	921	1	Direct speech
II. 547–49	2 5/12	Challenge	Tydeus	Theban warriors	933–34	2	Direct speech
II. 620–23	3 3/4	SoE[675]	Chromis	Theban warriors	1005–08	4	Direct speech

[673] Descriptive narrative.
[674] *Lacuna* – missing text corresponds to lacuna in Adv.MS.72.1.8.
[675] Speech of encouragement.

Thebaid	**Lines of Verse**	**Type of Speech**	**Addressor(s)**	**Addressee(s)**	***TnT***	**Lines of prose**	**Direct/ Indirect speech**
II. 641	5/6	Taunt	Brother of Periphas	Tydeus	1019–20	1	Direct speech
II. 649–54	5	Deliberation	Menoetes	Tydeus	1024–26	3	Direct speech
II. 655–59	3 1/3	Responsion	Tydeus	Menoetes	1027–31	5	Direct speech
II. 661–68	7	Taunt	Tydeus	Theban warriors	1032–33	2	Indirect speech
II. 686–90	4	Command	Minerva	Tydeus	1041–44	4	Direct speech
II. 697–703	7	Command	Tydeus	Maeon			*Lacuna*
II. 715–42	28	Prayer	Tydeus	Minerva			*Lacuna*
III. 6, 9–18	9 5/6	Soliloquy	Eteocles	Himself			*Lacuna*
III. 59–77, 83–87	22 7/12	Praise/ Blame	Maeon	Eteocles			*Lacuna*
III. 151–68	18	Mourning/ Consolation	Ide	Ide's sons			*Lacuna*
III. 179–213	35	Mourning/ Consolation	Aletes	Thebans			*Lacuna*
III. 229–52	23 7/12	Command	Jupiter	Mars, Olympian gods			*Lacuna*
III. 269–91	22 5/12	Deliberation	Venus	Mars	1049–51, 1055–65	14	Direct speech
III. 295–316	21 7/12	Responsion	Mars	Venus	1070–83	14	Direct speech
III. 348–65	17 1/4	SoE	Tydeus	Argives and Adrastus	1112–26	15	Direct speech
III. 367–81	13 1/2	Deliberation	Polynices	Eteocles, Argives, Tydeus	1130–35	6	Direct speech
III. 388–93	5 5/6	Responsion	Adrastus	Polynices	1141–47	7	Direct speech
III. 471–96	25 1/12	Prayer	Amphiaraus	Jupiter	1211–15	5	Indirect speech / Direct speech
III. 502–15	14	Description	Melampus	Amphiaraus, Apollo	1219–23	5	Direct speech

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Thebaid	**Lines of Verse**	**Type of Speech**	**Addressor(s)**	**Addressee(s)**	***TnT***	**Lines of prose**	**Direct/ Indirect speech**
III. 516–45	29 3/4	Description	Amphiaraus	Melampus	1223–47	25	Direct speech
III. 546	5/12	Question	Melampus	Amphiaraus	1249–49	1	Direct speech
III. 546–47	1	Responsion	Amphiaraus	Melampus	1250–53	4	Direct speech
III. 607–18	10 5/6	SoE	Capaneus	Achaeans, Amphiaraus	1305–10	6	Direct speech
III. 620–47	26 11/12	Oracular /Prophetic	Amphiaraus	Achaeans	1312–19, 1323–27	13	Direct speech
III. 648–69	21	Threats	Capaneus	Amphiaraus	1329–33	4	Direct speech
III. 687–710	24	Deliberation	Argia	Adrastus	1348–58	10	Direct speech
III. 712–20	8 5/12	Responsion	Adrastus	Argia	1358–61	3	Direct speech
cf. III. 193–95		No trace	Eriphyle	Argia	1504–06	3	Direct speech
IV. 200–10	10 5/6	Soliloquy	Argia	Herself	1506–07	1	Indirect speech (Argia to Polynices)
IV. 318–40	22 7/12	Deliberation	Atalanta	Parthenopaeus	1579–80	2	Indirect speech
IV. 383–404	21 7/12	Prayer	Bacchic priestess	Bacchus	1615–20	5	Direct speech
IV. 473–87	15	Prayer	Tiresias	Pluto	1646–51	7	Indirect speech
IV. 501–18	18 1/12	Prayer	Tiresias	Underworld goddesses	1653–55	2	Indirect speech
IV. 519–35	17	Description	Manto	Tiresias	1655–67	13	Direct speech
IV. 536–48	12 5/6	Command	Tiresias	Manto	1667–74	8	Direct speech
IV. 553–78	26	Description	Manto	Tiresias	1674–77	4	Direct speech
IV. 583–602	18 3/4	Oracular /Prophetic	Tiresias	Manto	1680–84	5	Direct speech
IV. 610–24	14 1/4	Deliberation	Tiresias	Ghost of Laius	1698–99	2	Indirect speech
IV. 626–44	18 2/3	Oracular /Prophetic	Ghost of Laius	Tiresias, Eteocles	1700–11	11	Direct speech
IV. 670–78	8 1/4	Soliloquy	Bacchus	Himself	1734–40	7	Direct speech (to

Thebaid	**Lines of Verse**	**Type of Speech**	**Addressor(s)**	**Addressee(s)**	***TnT***	**Lines of prose**	**Direct/ Indirect speech**
							Bacchic followers)
IV. 684–96	12 5/6	Command	Bacchus	Water Nymphs	1744–47	4	Direct speech
IV. 753–71	19	Prayer	Adrastus	Hypsipyle	1767–74	8	Direct speech
IV. 776–85	9 1/4	Responsion	Hypsipyle	Adrastus	1777–83	7	Direct speech
IV. 811	1/6	SoE	Argus	Argive warriors			No trace
IV. 812	1/6	SoE	Argive warriors	*inter se*			No trace
IV. 832–50	19	Prayer	Argive chieftain	Nymph of Langia	1804–09	5	Indirect speech / Direct speech
V. 20–27	7 5/6	Question	Adrastus	Hypsipyle	1821–22	1	Direct speech
V. 29–39	10 7/12	Responsion	Hypsipyle	Adrastus	1823–29	7	Direct speech
V. 43–47	5	Deliberation	Adrastus	Hypsipyle	1831–33	2	Direct speech
V. 49–498	449 5/6	Narration	Hypsipyle	Adrastus and the Argive Warriors	1834–2056	222	Direct speech
V. 104–29, 32–38	36 5/12	Deliberation	Polyxo	Lemnian women	1858–69	12	Direct speech
V. 136, 137–38	2 1/4	Command	Venus	Polyxo	1868–69	2	Indirect speech
cf. V.245		No trace	Thoas	Hypsipyle	1901–02	1	Direct speech
V. 245–47	2 1/6	Deliberation	Hypsipyle	Thoas	1902–03	2	Direct speech
V. 271–84	13 1/6	Command	Bacchus	Thoas, Hypsipyle	1915–18	4	Direct speech
V. 491–92	2	Praise/ Blame	Lemnian crowd	*inter se*	2051–53	3	Indirect speech
V. 565–70	4 5/6	Challenge	Capaneus	Serpent	2086–88	2	Direct speech
V. 608–35	27 1/4	Mourning/ Consolation	Hypsipyle	Opheltes	2102–12	10	Direct speech
V. 647	1	Oracular /Prophetic	Priestess	Lycurgus	2115–17	2	Indirect speech
V. 656–60	4	Threats	Lycurgus	Argive princes	2124–26	3	Direct speech

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Thebaid	**Lines of Verse**	**Type of Speech**	**Addressor(s)**	**Addressee(s)**	***TnT***	**Lines of prose**	**Direct/ Indirect speech**
V. 663–64	3/4	Command	Tydeus	Lycurgus	2129–30	1	Direct speech
V. 669–71	1 7/12	Command	Adrastus and Amphiaraus	Lycurgus and Tydeus	2136–37	2	Direct speech
V. 672–79	7 5/6	Threats	Tydeus	Lycurgus	2139–42	4	Direct speech
V. 681–89	8 1/3	Oracular /Prophetic	Lycurgus	Tydeus	2143–45	3	Direct speech
V. 701–903	2 1/3	Command	Adrastus	Argive warriors	2157–59	2	Direct speech
V. 733–52	20	Oracular /Prophetic	Amphiaraus	Adrastus and the Argive Princes	2178–88	10	Direct speech
VI. 138–73, 174–76, 180–84	42 5/6	Mourning/ Consolation	Eurydice (Opheltes' mother)	Opheltes	2233–38	5	Direct speech
VI. 197–201	4 7/12	Prayer	Lycurgus	Jupiter	2242–44	2	Direct speech
VI. 319–20	1 1/4	Command	Adrastus	Polynices	2285–88	3	Direct speech
VI. 372–83	11 3/4	Soliloquy	Apollo	Himself	2321–25	5	Direct speech
VI. 618	1/6	SoE	Arcadian warriors	*inter se*	cf. 2454–55		No trace
VI. 627–30	3 5/12	Command	Adrastus	Idas and other running contestants	2459–61	3	Direct speech
VI. 633–37	5	Prayer	Parthenopaeus	Diana	cf. 2462		No trace
VI. 656–59	2 5/12	Challenge	Hippomedon	Achaean warriors	2480–83	3	Direct speech
VI. 726–30	4 5/6	SoE	Adrastus	Phlegyas, Achaean competitors	2498–2500	2	DN
VI. 734–37	3 2/3	Challenge	Capaneus	Achaean warriors	2505–08	3	Direct speech
VI. 809–12	4	Command	Adrastus	Achaean warriors	2541–43	3	Direct speech
VI. 816–17	1 7/12	Deliberation	Tydeus and Hippomedon	Capaneus	2546–48	2	Direct speech
VI. 819–22	3 1/4	Responsion	Capaneus	Tydeus and Hippomedon	2549–50	2	Direct speech

Thebaid	**Lines of Verse**	**Type of Speech**	**Addressor(s)**	**Addressee(s)**	***TnT***	**Lines of prose**	**Direct/ Indirect speech**
VI. 906–08	2 7/12	Praise/ Blame	Tydeus	Tydeus' companions	2568	1	Indirect speech
VI. 914–19	5 7/12	Command	Adrastus	Agreus and Polynices	2576–78	2	Direct speech
VII. 6–33	28	Command	Jupiter	Mercury	2598–2600	2	Direct speech
VII. 77–80	4	Question	Mars	Mercury	2603	1	DN
VII. 93–103	10 1/4	Prayer	Adrastus	Opheltes/ Archemorus	2591–93	3	Direct speech
VII. 123–26	3 1/6	Question	Argive crowd	*inter se*	cf. 2606–08	2	DN
VII. 155–92	38	Deliberation	Bacchus	Jupiter	2617–22	5	Direct speech
VII. 195–221	26 5/12	Responsion	Jupiter	Bacchus	2624–29	5	Direct speech
VII. 247–52	5 7/12	Deliberation	Antigone	Phorbas	2652–54	2	Direct speech
VII. 254–89	36	Description	Phorbas	Antigone	2655–75	22	Direct speech
VII. 291–93	3	Question	Antigone	Phorbas	2678–82	4	Direct speech
VII. 294–358, 363–73	75 7/12	Description	Phorbas	Antigone	2682–2706	25	Direct speech
VII. 375–90	15 5/12	SoE	Eteocles	Theban warriors	2709–12	4	Direct speech
VII. 433–34	2	SoE	Hippomedon	Argive warriors	2727–29	3	Direct speech
VII. 483–85	2	Deliberation	Jocasta	Argive warriors	cf. 2745		No trace
VII. 490–92	2 1/4	Question	Jocasta	Argive princes	2570–52	2	Direct speech
VII. 497–527	30 1/4	Deliberation	Jocasta	Polynices, Argive warriors	2755–59	5	Direct speech
VII. 539–59	20 5/12	Deliberation	Tydeus	Argive warriors, Jocasta, Polynices	2764–65	2	Direct speech
VII. 612–14	2 5/12	Command	Tydeus	Jocasta, Antigone and Ismene	2792–93	2	Direct speech
VII. 663–68	5 1/6	Praise/ Blame	Eunaeus	Argive warriors	2843–45	2	Direct speech

Appendix I

Thebaid	**Lines of Verse**	**Type of Speech**	**Addressor(s)**	**Addressee(s)**	***TnT***	**Lines of prose**	**Direct/ Indirect speech**
VII. 677–79	2 1/4	Taunt	Capaneus	Eunaeus	2850–52	3	Direct speech
VII. 730–35	5 5/6	Prayer	Hypseus	Asopus	2892–93	1	DN/ No trace
VII. 772–77	5 11/12	Command	Apollo	Amphiaraus	2918–22	5	Direct speech
VII. 779–88	10	Prayer	Amphiaraus	Apollo	2923–29	7	Direct speech
VIII. 34–79	45	Command	Pluto	Underworld deities and Tisiphone	2948–49	2	Indirect speech
VIII. 84–85	1 5/12	Threats	Pluto	Amphiaraus	2949–50	1	Indirect speech
VIII. 90–122	33	Prayer	Amphiaraus	Pluto	2951–59	8	Direct speech
VIII. 138–50	12 1/4	Deliberation	Palaemon	Adrastus	2969–72	3	Direct speech
VIII. 174–207	34	Mourning/ Consolation	Argive troops	*inter se*	2984–86	2	Indirect speech
VIII. 303–38	35 1/2	Prayer	Thiodamas	Tellus	cf. 3015		No trace
VIII. 472–73	1 7/12	Taunt	Tydeus	Idas	3144–47	3	Direct speech
VIII. 502–16	14 7/12	Praise/ Blame	Hercules	Minerva	3174–79	6	Direct speech
VIII. 582–83	1 1/6	Taunt	Tydeus	Atys	3210–12	2	Direct speech
VIII. 588–91	3 7/12	Prayer	Tydeus	Minerva	3216–18	2	DN
VIII. 600–05	5 1/4	SoE	Menoeceus	Theban warriors	3223–24	2	Direct speech
VIII. 622–35	13 7/12	Narration	Ismene	Antigone	3230–34	3	Direct speech
VIII. 664–72	8 5/12	Challenge	Tydeus	Theban warriors	3257–59	3	Direct speech
VIII. 677–79	2 5/6	Challenge	Tydeus	Eteocles	cf. 3261		No trace
VIII. 735–44	9 1/4	Deliberation	Tydeus	Argive warriors	3309–18	8	Direct speech
IX. 12–24	11 5/6	SoE	Eteocles	Theban warriors	3349–53	4	Direct speech
IX.49–72, 75–76	25 1/6	Mourning/ Consolation	Polynices	Tydeus	3374–90	18	Direct speech
IX. 96–103	7 7/12	Taunt	Eteocles	Hippomedon	3408–13	5	Direct speech

Thebaid	**Lines of Verse**	**Type of Speech**	**Addressor(s)**	**Addressee(s)**	***TnT***	**Lines of prose**	**Direct/ Indirect speech**
IX. 137–39	2 1/3	Taunt	Hippomedon	Leontes	3441	1	Direct speech
IX. 157–65, 166–68	9 1/3	Deliberation	Tisiphone/ Halys	Hippomedon	3453–59, 3461–62	9	Direct speech
cf. IX. 177–79		DN	Hippomedon	Himself?	3472	1	Direct speech
IX. 211–17	6 7/12	Deliberation	Hippomedon	Tydeus' steed	3494–97	4	Direct speech
IX. 294–301	7 5/6	Taunt	Hippomedon	Panemus	3558–62	5	Direct speech
IX. 340–43	3 1/6	Challenge	Crenaeus	Hippomedon	3579–81	2	Direct speech
IX. 350	1/6	Apostrophe	Crenaeus	Ismenis	cf. 3584–85		DN
IX. 356	1/6	Apostrophe	Ismenis	Crenaeus	cf. 3589		DN
IX. 376–98	23	Mourning/ Consolation	Ismenis	Crenaeus, Jupiter	3595–99, 3601–05	8	Direct speech
IX. 421–45	24 5/6	Apostrophe	Ismenos	Jupiter, Bacchus, Hippomedon	3607–13	7	Direct speech
IX. 476–80	4 7/12	Taunt	Hippomedon	Ismenos	3625–26	2	Direct speech
IX. 506–10	4	Prayer	Hippomedon	Mars	3642–44	3	Direct speech
IX. 511–19	8 1/6	Deliberation	Juno	Jupiter	3647–54	7	Direct speech
IX. 544–46	2 1/6	Praise/ Blame	Hypseus	Aonian warriors	3664–66	3	Direct speech
IX. 548–50	2 7/12	Prayer	Capaneus	Capaneus' right arm	3671–73	2	Direct speech
IX. 557–59	2 5/12	Taunt	Capaneus	Hypseus	3678–79	2	Direct speech
IX. 562–65	3 5/6	Apostrophe	Capaneus	Hippomedon	3682–84	3	Direct speech
IX. 608–35	27 5/12	Prayer	Atalanta	Diana	3704–10	7	Direct speech
IX. 650–62	12 3/4	Oracular /Prophetic	Apollo	Diana	3715–20	6	Direct speech
IX. 663–67	4 1/3	Threats	Diana	Apollo	3721–22	2	Direct speech
IX. 713–25	12 1/12	Apostrophe	Diana	Menoeceus	3753–57	5	Direct speech
IX. 779–87	8 3/4	Taunt	Amphion	Parthenopaeus	3777–82	6	Direct speech

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Thebaid	**Lines of Verse**	**Type of Speech**	**Addressor(s)**	**Addressee(s)**	***TnT***	**Lines of prose**	**Direct/ Indirect speech**
IX. 790–800	11	Taunt	Parthenopaeus	Amphion	3783–85	2	Direct speech
IX. 812–14	2 7/12	Deliberation	Diana	Parthenopaeus	3794–96	2	Direct speech
IX. 815–19	5	Deliberation	Parthenopaeus	Diana	3797–3800	4	Direct speech
IX. 825–30	5 7/12	Deliberation	Venus	Mars	3801–02	2	DN
IX. 835–37	2 7/12	Command	Mars	Diana	3807–09	2	Direct speech
IX. 885–900, 901–07	22 5/12	Command	Parthenopaeus	Dorceus	3843–52	10	Direct speech
X. 21–35	14 1/4	SoE	Eteocles	Theban warriors	3877–81	5	Direct speech
X. 67–69	3	Prayer	Argolic mothers	Juno, Mercury	3895–96	1	DN
X. 126–31	6	Command	Iris	Somnus	3901–03	2	Direct speech
X. 188–218	31	SoE	Thiodamas	Achaean warriors	3916–20	4	Direct speech
X. 206–11	4 1/2	Deliberation	Amphiaraus' spirit	Thiodamas	3917–19	2	Indirect speech
X. 236–44	8 7/12	SoE	Adrastus	Achaean warriors	3927–29	2	Direct speech
X. 266–68	1 11/12	SoE	Adrastus	Achaean warriors			No trace
X. 269–71	2 5/12	SoE	Thiodamas	Achaean warriors	3943–44	2	Direct speech
X. 330–35	5 7/12	Deliberation	Actor	Thiodamas	3966–68	3	Direct speech
X. 337–45	9	Prayer	Thiodamas	Apollo	3970–71	2	DN
X. 351–59	9	Deliberation	Hopleus	Dymas	3979–83	5	Direct speech
X. 360–63	3 1/2	Responsion	Dymas	Hopleus	3983–85	2	Direct speech
X. 365–70	5	Prayer	Dymas	Cynthia			No trace
X. 393	7/12	Command	Amphion	Dymas and Hopleus	4000–02	2	Direct speech
X. 423–30	7 5/12	Deliberation	Dymas	Theban warriors	4025–27	3	Direct speech

Thebaid	**Lines of Verse**	**Type of Speech**	**Addressor(s)**	**Addressee(s)**	***TnT***	**Lines of prose**	**Direct/ Indirect speech**
X. 431–34	3 3/4	Deliberation	Amphion	Dymas	4028–29	2	Direct speech
X. 436–38, 441	3 5/12	Responsion	Dymas	Amphion	4030–32	2	Direct speech
X. 482–86	4 7/12	SoE	Capaneus	Argive warriors	4060–64	5	Direct speech
X. 492	1	Command	Megareus	Theban sentry	4074–76	3	Direct speech
X. 584–87	2 5/12	Deliberation	Thebans	Thebans	4131–34	3	Indirect speech
X.588	5/6	Responsion	Thebans	Thebans	4134–36	3	Indirect speech
X. 592–98	5 1/2	Command	Tiresias	Theban oracular attendant	4140	1	Direct speech
X. 610–15	6	Oracular /Prophetic	Tiresias	Thebans	4145–49	4	Direct speech
cf. X. 624–26		DN	Creon	Tiresias	4154–55	1	Indirect speech
X. 662–71	10	Deliberation	Virtus/Manto	Menoeceus	4165–68	4	Direct speech
X. 680–81	1 7/12	Responsion	Menoeceus	Virtus/Manto	4168–70	2	Direct speech
X. 690–718	28 5/12	Deliberation	Creon	Menoeceus	4172–74	2	Direct speech
X. 722–34	12 5/12	Responsion	Menoeceus	Creon	4175–76	1	Direct speech
X. 762–73	12	Prayer	Menoeceus	Battle gods and Apollo	4185–89	4	Direct speech
X.793–814	22	Mourning/ Consolation	Eurydice (Menoeceus' mother)	Menoeceus	4196–99	3	Direct speech
X. 845–47	2 11/12	Soliloquy	Capaneus	Himself	4225–29	4	Direct speech
X. 873–77	3 5/6	Taunt	Capaneus	Thebans	4240–42	2	Direct speech
X. 888–89	1 1/12	Apostrophe	Bacchus	Jupiter	cf. 4246–51	5	DN
X. 899–906	7 3/4	Challenge	Capaneus	Jupiter and Olympian gods	4257–61	4	Direct speech
X. 909–10	1 1/2	Soliloquy	Jupiter	Himself	4262–63	1	Direct speech
X. 925–26	1 5/6	Taunt	Capaneus	Jupiter and Olympian	4271–74	3	Direct speech

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Thebaid	**Lines of Verse**	**Type of Speech**	**Addressor(s)**	**Addressee(s)**	***TnT***	**Lines of prose**	**Direct/ Indirect speech**
				gods			
XI. 76–112	37	Deliberation	Tisiphone	Megaera	4320–25	5	Direct speech
XI. 122–33	12	Command	Jupiter	Olympian gods			No trace
XI. 155–92	38	Deliberation	Polynices	Adrastus	4340–45	6	Direct speech
XI. 201–02	1 1/6	Command	Megaera	Polynices	4349–50	2	Direct speech
XI. 210–25	16	Prayer	Eteocles	Jupiter	4354–56	3	DN
XI. 242–45	4	Deliberation	Aegyptus	Eteocles	4361–64	3	Direct speech
XI. 248–49	1 1/6	Prayer	Eteocles	Jupiter	cf. 4364–65		No trace
XI. 257–58	7/12	Deliberation	Companions of Eteocles (1)	Eteocles			No trace
XI. 258–59	1	Question	Companions of Eteocles (2)	Eteocles			No trace
XI. 259–60	1 2/3	Praise/ Blame	Companions of Eteocles (3)	Eteocles			No trace
XI. 260–62	1 5/12	Deliberation	Companions of Eteocles (4)	Eteocles	4367–69	2	Direct speech
XI. 269–96	27 5/6	Deliberation	Creon	Eteocles	4379–84	6	Direct speech
XI. 298–308	10 1/3	Responsion	Eteocles	Creon	cf. 4384–85	1	DN
XI. 329–53	25	Deliberation	Jocasta	Eteocles	4391–98	8	Direct speech
XI. 363–82	19 1/6	Deliberation	Antigone	Polynices	4407–14	7	Direct speech
XI. 389–92	3 1/3	Responsion	Eteocles	Polynices	4423–25	2	Direct speech
XI. 393–95	2 5/6	Responsion	Polynices	Eteocles	4428–32	5	Direct speech
XI. 429–35	5 2/3	Deliberation	Adrastus	Polynices, Eteocles	4465–69	4	Direct speech
XI. 465–70, 471	5 1/3	Apostrophe	Pietas	Natura	cf. 4486–86	1.5	No trace

Thebaid	**Lines of Verse**	**Type of Speech**	**Addressor(s)**	**Addressee(s)**	***TnT***	**Lines of prose**	**Direct/ Indirect speech**
XI. 478–81	3 5/12	SoE	Pietas	Argive and Theban warriors	4490–91	1	DN
XI. 484–92	8 1/6	Praise/ Blame	Tisiphone	Pietas			No trace
XI. 504–08	5	Prayer	Polynices	Underworld gods	4499–4500	2	Direct speech
XI. 548–51	4	Taunt	Polynices	Eteocles	4530–32	3	Direct speech
XI. 557–60	2 5/6	Command	Polynices	Argive companions	4539–44	5	Direct speech
XI. 568–72	4 1/3	Taunt	Polynices	Eteocles	4551–53	2	Direct speech
XI. 594–95	1 1/3	Deliberation	Oedipus	Antigone	4559–61	2	Direct speech
XI. 605–26, 630–31	23 5/12	Mourning/ Consolation	Oedipus	Eteocles and Polynices	4564–67	3	Direct speech
XI. 669–72	3 7/12	Command	Creon	Oedipus	4590–93	3	Direct speech
XI. 677–707	30 5/12	Praise/ Blame	Oedipus	Creon	4595–98	3	Direct speech
XI. 708–39	31	Deliberation	Antigone	Creon	4601–05	4.5	Direct speech
XI. 750–54	4 2/3	Responsion	Creon	Antigone	4607–09	3	Direct speech
XII. 72–92, 94–102	29 1/4	Mourning/ Consolation	Creon	Menoeceus			No trace
cf. XII. 111–16		DN	Argia	Herself?	4637–39	3	Direct speech
XII. 149–66	17 7/12	Deliberation	Ornytus	Widows of the Argive leaders	4653–64	4	Direct speech
XII. 196–204	8 1/3	Deliberation	Argia	Argive widows	4669–91	3	Direct speech
XII. 209–19	10 1/12	Apostrophe	Argia	Polynices, Ornytus			No trace
XII. 246–54	9	Description	Menoetes	Argia	4675–78	4	Direct speech
XII. 256–67	11 1/4	Prayer	Argia	Thebes	4679–81	2.5	DN
XII. 299–308	10	Deliberation	Juno	Diana	4696–97	3	DN

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Thebaid	**Lines of Verse**	**Type of Speech**	**Addressor(s)**	**Addressee(s)**	***TnT***	**Lines of prose**	**Direct/ Indirect speech**
XII. 322–48	27	Mourning/ Consolation	Argia	Polynices	4703–12	8	Direct speech
XII. 333–35	2 3/4	Deliberation	Argia	Polynices	4705–07	2	Direct speech
XII. 366–67	1 1/12	Question	Antigone	Argia	4717	0.5	Direct speech
cf. XII. 370–71		DN	Antigone	Argia	4719–21	3	Direct speech
XII. 374–80	6 5/12	Responsion	Argia	Antigone	4723–24	1	Direct speech
XII. 382–85	3 1/6	Praise/ Blame	Antigone	Argia	cf. 4725, 4726–27	2	DN
XII. 392–404	12 1/4	Narration	Argia	Antigone	4726	1	DN
XII. 406–08	3	Deliberation	Menoetes	Argia and Antigone	4729–31	2	Direct speech
XII. 437–46	10	Apostrophe	Antigone	Argia, Eteocles, Polynices	4738–40	3	DN
XII. 458	1/4	Deliberation	Antigone	Theban soldiers	4747–50	3	DN
XII. 458	1/6	Deliberation	Argia	Theban soldiers	4747–50	3	DN
XII. 459	1/4	Deliberation	Antigone	Theban soldiers	4747–50	3	DN
XII. 459	1/3	Deliberation	Argia	Theban soldiers	4747–50	3	DN
XII. 546–86	41	Deliberation	Evadne	Theseus	4779–86	7	Direct speech
XII. 590–98	8 3/4	Command	Theseus	Creon, Phegeus	4792–93	2	Direct speech
XII. 642–48	7	SoE	Theseus	Attic warriors	4812–14	2	Direct speech
cf. XII. 681–82		DN	Phegeus	Creon	4836–37	1	Direct speech
XII. 689–92	3 1/3	Responsion	Creon	Phegeus	4838–40	2	Direct speech
cf. XII. 712–14		DN	Theseus	Argive dead	4853–57	6	Direct speech
XII. 761–66	5 11/12	Threats	Creon	Theseus	4884–88	4	Direct speech
XII. 771–73	1 7/12	Prayer	Theseus	Argive deified souls	4890–92	2	Direct speech
XII. 779–81	2 11/12	Taunt	Theseus	Creon	4895–98	3	Direct speech

Appendix II

Comparison of similes between Statius's *Thebaid* and the Middle Irish *Thebaid*[676]

Part I

The similes in this secction of Appendix II reflect similes translated from the *Thebaid* and are organised by translation type. For contextual purposes, I have sometimes included text from the *Thebaid* and the Irish translation which either precedes or follows a simile. This information is underlined with dots and is not included in the line numbers relating to the simile or translation.

The similes are grouped as follows: close translation, close translation with scholium; descriptive interpretation, descriptive translation with scholium, replacement Irish simile, replacement Irish metaphor, and not translated.[677]

Close translations

***Thebaid*, I.92**	***TnT*, 186–89**
igne Iovis lapsisque citatior astris.	[A]mal saignen tincurach teindtigi, no amal retlaind luaith lasamhuin na firmaminti foluaimnigi.
[S]wifter than Jupiter's fire or falling stars.	[L]ike darting fiery levin, or like a swift star lighting up the quivering firmament.

***Thebaid*, I.131–36**	***TnT*, 211–14**
sic ubi delectos per torva armenta iuvencos | agricola imposito sociare affectat aratro, | illi indignantes, quis nondum vomere multo | ardua nodosos cervix descendit in armos, | in diversa trahunt atque aequis vincula laxant | viribus et vario confundunt limite sulcos.	[A]mal da tharb trena tuathmeara thnuthacha na chuing adbail infhulaiġ, co ralcansat 7 co ralagaigset a cengail 7 a cuibrigi ac imchosnum 7 ac imthairriġ fri araile.
So when a farmer essays a to yoke two bullocks chosen from the fierce herd at one plough, they rebel; not yet has many a ploughshare bowed their lofty necks into their brawny shoulders. They pull opposite ways and with equal strength loosen their	[L]ike two strong, vicious, envious bulls under a huge intolerable yoke, so that they strained and weakened their bonds and fetters, as they mutually strove and pulled against another.

[676] The list of similes is developed from Dominik, 'Similes and Their Programmatic Role in the *Thebaid*', pp. 266–90 (Appendix A, pp. 286–90).
[677] Changes to Calder's English translations have only been made where similes also appear in the main text of this study (e.g. **Chapter 6**).

bonds, perplexing the furrows with motley track.	

***Thebaid*, I.370–75**	***TnT*, 303–09**
ac velut hiberno deprensus navita ponto, | cui neque Temo piger neque amico sidere monstrat | Luna vias, medio caeli pelagique tumultu | stat rationis inops, iam iamque aut saxa malignis | exspectat summersa vadis aut vertice acuto | spumantes scopulos erectae incurrere prorae.	Ua he immorro samail in trenfhir sin do Tiauandaib do sil calma Chathim mic Agenoir ar setaib na sliged sin amal bis stiuraigi cona luing luchtmair lanmoir ar lar in mara garbfhuair gemreta gan rind 7 gan retlaind d' [fh]aiscin re himluad n-imthechta a sin, acht seastan 7 seiseilbi in lera loṅgaig lanadbail 'ga buaidread 7 'ga badbrisiud, cona fitir ca cuan no ca caladport cusa rachad.
As a mariner caught in a winter sea, to whom neither lazy Wain nor Moon with friendly radiance shows directions, stands clueless in mid commotion of land and sea, expecting every moment rocks sunk in treacherous shallows, or foaming cliffs with spiky tops to run upon the rearing prow.	Now this was the likeness of that Theban champion of the brave seed of Cadmus, son of Agenor. He was on the paths of that way as a steersman is, with his heavy-laden huge ship on the expanse of the rough cold wintry sea, seeing no point, no star whereby to steer a course, but the roar and tumult of the vast main full of ships, confusing and wrecking him, so that he knew not what haven or port of refuge he should make.

***Thebaid*, II.128–32**	***TnT*, 642–44**
Qualis ubi audito venantum murmure tigris | horruit in maculas somnosque excussit inertes, | bella cupit laxatque genas et temperat ungues, | mox ruit in turmas natisque alimenta cruentis | spirantem fert ore virum: sic excitus ira | ductor in absentem consumit proelia fratrem.	[A]mal thiger nemnig naimdigi arna duscad asa suan 7 asa sirchodlud do muirn 7 do medar lochta na sealga aca sreathad 'na timchell.
As when a tigress hears the noise of the hunters, she bristles into her stripes and shakes off the sloth of sleep; athirst for battle she loosens her jaws and flexes her claws, then rushes upon the troop and carries in her mouth a breathing man, food for her bloody young; so in fury does the chieftain fight it out against his absent brother.	[L]ike a venomous hostile tiger, roused from sleep and long slumber by the clamour and the jollity of the hunters ranking around him.

***Thebaid*, II.675–81**	***TnT*, 1032–37**
ut leo, qui campis longe custode fugato | Massylas depastus oves, ubi sanguine multo | luxuriata fames cervixque et tabe gravatae | consedere iubae, mediis in caedibus astat | aeger, hians, victusque cibis; nec iam amplius irae | crudescunt: tantum vacuis ferit aëra malis | molliaque eiecta delambit vellera lingua.	[A]mal leoman mer Maisileagda ar gur air almad 7 indili co nbi scitheach ar caithim an comaid sin.

Even as a lion who has chased the shepherd far from the fields and gorged on Massylian sheep, when his hunger has revelled in blood galore and his neck and mane have sunk heavy with filth, stands sick amid the slaughter, gaping and o'er–done with food, nor any more does his fury swell; he only strikes air with empty jaws and licks soft wool with protruded tongue.	[L]ike a mad Mauretanian lion after slaughtering flocks and herds, till it is weary of consuming so much as that.

***Thebaid*, III.317–23**	***TnT*, 1084–86**
non ocius alti | in terras cadit ira Iovis, si quando nivalem | Othryn et Arctoae gelidum caput institit Ossae | armavitque in nube manum: volat ignea moles | saeva dei mandata ferens, caelumque trisulca | territat omne coma iamdudum aut ditibus agris | signa dare aut pono miseros involvere nautas.	Ba deínigtir saignen luath lasamain ré tinchur a diubraicthi a n-aimsir adfuair anbhthenaigh, amal tainig Mairt mac Ioip roime teachtairecht sin.
Not more swiftly does the wrath of lofty Jupiter fall to earth, should he take stand on snowy Othrys or the chill peak of Arctic Ossa and arm his hand in the cloud. Flies the fiery mass, bearing the god's cruel commission, affrighting the while all heaven with triple tail, to give a sign to wealthy fields or plunge hapless mariners into the deep.	As quick as swift flaming lightning at the discharge of its shooting in chill stormy weather, thus came Mars son of Jove forward with that message.

***Thebaid*, III.330–35**	***TnT*, 1096–99**
sic nota in pascua taurus | bellator redit, adverso cui colla suoque | sanguine proscissisque natant palearibus armi; | tunc quoque lassa tumet virtus multumque superbit | aequore despecto; vacua iacet hostis harena | turpe gemens crudosque vetat sentire dolores.	Uair is amlaid dobai Tit mac Aeniasa andsin amal tarb comthnuthach coscarach ar traethad 7 ar toirnem chuingida choimfedma, coma lochairthi lanmarb dá eis arna fudbogud.
So does the fighting bull return to his familiar pasture; his neck and shoulders swim with blood, his enemy's and his own, his dewlaps are torn and his shoulders swim; even then his weary valour swells and he walks proudly, despising the ground; his foe lies on the open sand, shamefully groaning, nor lets him feel his raw pain.	For it is thus Tydeus, son of Oeneus, was at that time - like a fierce victorious bull after subduing and bringing down a well-matched antagonist, so that he was mangled and utterly dead in consequence after despoiling him.

***Thebaid*, III.671–76**	***TnT*, 1337–39**
ut rapidus torrens, animos cui verna ministrant | flamina et exuti concreto frigore montes, | cum vagus in campos frustra	[A]mal fogrugud doní sruth buinni dian dileann a n-aimsir adfuair earrchaidi dar fegaib 7 dar fanglentaib an talman.

prohibentibus exit | obicibus, resonant permixto turbine tecta, | arva, armenta, viri, donec stetit improbus alto | colle minor magnoque invenit in aggere ripas.	
'Twas like a swift torrent, encouraged by spring breezes and mountains stripped of their frozen chill, when it comes wandering out into the plain over obstructions that vainly stay its course: dwellings, fields, cattle, men resound in the mingled swirl, until the ungovernable flow halts bested before a high hill or finds banks in some great rampart.	[L]ike the sound which a stream rushing headlong in flood makes in chill spring-time down the watersheds and the sloping glens of the earth.

***Thebaid*, IV.69–73**	***TnT*, 1402–05**
ipse annis sceptrisque subit venerabilis aeque: | ut possessa diu taurus meat arduus inter | pascua iam laxa cervice et inanibus armis, | dux tamen: haud illum bello attemptare iuvencis | sunt animi; nam trunca vident de vulnere multo | cornua et ingentes plagarum in pectore nodos.	Et ua samalta in ri uasal Adraist iter na haireachtaib sin .i. tarb n-ard n-aduathmar co n-imad crecht arna cnesugud ina curp conna fedad ocdaim na n-almad fegad fair ri haduath a adarc tulmael tamnaigthi ri tenta gacha tachair.
He himself joins them, venerable alike in years and sceptre, like a bull moving tall among the pastures he has long possessed; his neck is slack now and his shoulders empty, but still he is the leader; the steers have no stomach to attempt him in battle, for they see his horns broken from many a blow and the massive nodules of breast wounds.	And the noble king Adrastus, amid those assemblies, resembled a lofty dreadful bull with a multitude of wounds cicatrized in his body, so that the oxen of the herds dared not look upon him for dread of his horns, polled in front and lopt with the stress of every encounter.

***Thebaid*, IV.95–100**	***TnT*, 1425–28**
ceu lubricus alta | anguis humo verni blanda ad spiramina solis | erigitur liber senio et squalentibus annis | exutus laetisque minax interviret herbis: | a miser, agrestum si quis per gramina hianti | obvius et primo fraudaverit ora veneno.	[A]mal eirges nathair oilmir anindech re tinchur na greni i llo samraid solusta, co nṫobruchtad tondgar a nemi uar feraib futhremra, cuna lamad duine na ceithri buain ris.
Like a slippery snake rising at the coaxing breath of vernal sunshine from deep earth, free of mould and stripped of musty years - a green threat among the lush grasses; woe to the rustic who comes in his way as he gapes in the herbage to rob his fangs of their first venom.	[A]s rises that slimy angry serpent before the influence of the sun on a bright summer day, so that waves of its poison were belched over woodland grasses, and man and cattle dared not touch it.

***Thebaid*, IV.139–44**	***TnT*, 1463–65**
non aliter silvas umeris et utroque refringens | pectore montano duplex Hylaeus ab antro | praecipitat: pavet Ossa vias, pecudesque feraeque | procubuere metu; non ipsis	[U]a samalta concrithnigitis na coillti 7 contairnitis na slebti sainemna soimtheachta ua cosaib in curad sin a[c] crathad a sceith iter na haireachtaib re tinchur tachuir.

fratribus horror | afuit, ingenti donec Peneia saltu | stagna subit magnumque obiectus detinet amnem.	
Not otherwise does double Hylaeus hurtle from his mountain cave, breaking the woods with his shoulders and twofold breast; Ossa dreads his path, cattle and wild beasts fall down in terror; even his brothers are not without fear, until with a mighty leap he reaches Peneus' pools and dams the great river with his bulk.	And it was like as if the woods were shaking and the excellent easily traversed hills were humbled under the feet of that hero as he shook his shield among the gatherings before delivering an attack.

***Thebaid*, IV.315–16**	***TnT*, 1578–79**
raptis velut aspera natis | praedatoris equi sequitur vestigia tigris.	[R]oering amal tigir tairptig tindesnaig in ndeagaid a mic da fhastud.
As an angry tigress bereft of her cub follows the tracks of the robber horse.	[S]he went like a bold and eager tiger after her son to detain him.

***Thebaid*, IV.363–68**	***TnT*, 1602–04**
ille velut pecoris lupus expugnator opimi, | pectora tabenti sanie gravis hirtaque saetis | ora cruentata deformis hiantia lana, | decedit stabulis huc illuc turbida versans | lumina, si duri comperta clade sequantur | pastores, magnique fugit non inscius ausi.	Et ua he samail Ethiocles, mar bis fael craesach confadach iter ceithrib arna comach. Anddar les ar teiched conlenfaitis oegaireada na tret trenmarbtha sin e uaden.
He is like a wolf that has stormed a fat sheepfold; his chest is heavy with rotting gore, the gaping bristly mouth ugly with bloodstained wool; leaving the pens, he turns uneasy glances this way and that to see whether the hardy shepherds have discovered the disaster and follow; conscious of great audacity, he flees.	And this was the likeness of Eteocles, as it were a gluttonous raging wolf is among beasts after the slaughter. It seems to him in flight that the shepherds of the slaughtered flock would follow him himself.

***Thebaid*, IV.812–15**	***TnT*, 1793–1796**
sic Ambracii per litora ponti | nauticus in remis iuvenum monstrante magistro | fit sonus inque vicem contra percussa reclamat | terra, salutatus cum Leucada pandit Apollo.	Et ua samalta coma fochrach firmaimint re nuall subochais int [s]loig sin ri heas na haband, amal nuall náired aca no-combadud intan conciṅgid calad.
So along the shores of the Ambracian sea sounds the cry of the sailors at the oars as the helmsman points (and loud the land returns the echo), saluting Apollo when he brings Leucas into view.	But it was like as if it were a rendering of the firmament with the joyous shout of that host at the river, fall, [or] like the shout of shipwrecked sailors when they enter into port.

***Thebaid*, IV.828–30**	***TnT*, 1803–04**
agmina bello | decertare putes iustumque in gurgite Martem | perfurere aut captam tolli victoribus urbem.	[U]a samalta coma seselbi catha 'ca commorad buredach na buidne sin ac ol inn usci.

'Twas as though armies were fighting a pitched battle raging in the flood or victors sacking a taken town.	[L]ike as it were a tumult gathering battle was the roar of that band as they drank the water.

***Thebaid*, V.5–6**	***TnT*, 1814–15**
sanguineis mixtum ceu fontibus ignem | hausissent belli magnasque in proelia mentes.	[A]mal concuirtis cath inn uair sin.
[A]s though they had consumed war-fire mingled in bloody waters and hearts high for battle.	[A]s if they were to join battle then.

***Thebaid*, V.165–69**	***TnT*, 1881–83**
'qualis cum cerva cruentis | circumuenta lupis, nullum cui pectore molli | robur et in volucri tenuis fiducia cursu, | praecipitat suspensa fugam, iam iamque teneri | credit et elusos audit concurrere morsus.'	'[A]mal aig n-allaid timtechech iter cuanairt croesoslaicthi confadacha do chonaib allta.'
'Like a deer surrounded by bloody wolves, whose soft heart knows no strength, whose meagre trust is in her speed; in terror she flees headlong and each moment thinks herself caught, hearing the snap of the bites she has eluded.'	'[L]ike a fugitive hind amid an open-mouthed raging pack of wolves.'

***Thebaid*, V.203–05**	***TnT*, 1887–89**
'non aliter Scythicos armenta per agros | Hyrcanae clausere leae, quas exigit ortu | prima fames, avidique implorant ubera nati.'	'[A]mal saga gera gortacha leoman da culenaib ac inred alma 7 indili.'
'Not otherwise do Hyrcanian lionesses encircle herds in Scythian fields; early hunger drives them forth at dawn and their greedy cubs implore their udders.'	'[L]ike lionesses keen and hungry from their whelps, raiding flocks and herds.'

***Thebaid*, V.338–39**	***TnT*, 1939–40**
'abruptam credas radicibus ire | Ortygiam aut fractum pelago decurrere montem.'	'[A]mal oleán do learaib in mara, no amal sliab lethan lanmor ar met.'
'You might think Ortygia was on the move reft from her roots or that a broken mountain was running over the main.'	'[L]ike to an isle of the sea spaces, or like a broad very great mountain in size.'

***Thebaid*, V.390–93**	***TnT*, 1982–86**
'talis Hyperborea virides nive verberat agros | Iuppiter; obruitur campis genus omne ferarum, | deprensaeque cadunt volucres, et messis amaro | strata gelu, fragor inde iugis, inde amnibus irae.'	'[C]oma samalta re frasaib cruaidi clothnechta inn a[i]msir gairb gemridh na bera rindgera romora, 7 na clocha cruindi comdibhraicthi, 7 na saighdi snasta sodibraicthi, 7 na slega lasamna langera trena 'roile isinn uair sin.'
'So does Jupiter lash green fields with Hyperborean snow; every kind of wild beast	'[S]o that like hard showers of hail in a rough winter season were the sharp-edged

on the plain is buried, the birds are caught and fall, the harvest is flattened with noxious ice, there is roaring in the mountains and wrath in the rivers.'	huge darts, the round easily hurled stones, the polished well-shot arrows, and the flaming full-sharp spears mingled with one another at that time.'

***Thebaid*, V.426–30**	***TnT*, 2017–19**
'arcana sic fama erumpere porta | caelicolas, si quando domos litusque rubentum | Aethiopum et mensas amor est iterare minores; | dant fluvii montesque locum, tum terra superbit | gressibus et paulum respirat caelifer Atlans.'	'Ba samail lindi in sluag sin 7 ba dei uaisli adhartha tiastais do dindgnaib roglana richid uan talmain.'
'So the sky-dwellers are said to burst forth from their secret gate should it be their wish to visit again the houses and shore and humbler banquets of the red Ethiopians, rivers and mountains give them passage, Earth is proud to feel their tread, and sky-bearer Atlas takes a brief respite.'	'That host seemed to us as if they were noble worshipful gods that should go to the very bright citadels of heaven from the earth.'

***Thebaid*, V.599–604**	***TnT*, 2099–2100**
'ac velut aligerae sedem fetusque parentis | cum piger umbrosa populatus in ilice serpens, | illa redit querulaeque domus mirata quietem | stat superimpendens advectosque horrida maesto | excutit ore cibos, cum solus in arbore paret | sanguis et errantes per capta cubilia plumae.'	[A]mal bis ethaid foluaimneach im net ar na choll do nathraig impi.'
'So when a sluggish snake has ravaged the dwelling and young of a winged parent in a shady ilex tree, she returns and wondering at the silence of the twittering home she stands hanging over it; aghast she tosses from her mouth the food she brought, while in the tree is seen only blood and feathers straying about the captured nest.'	'[L]ike a bird fluttering about a nest after it has been destroyed about her by a serpent.'

***Thebaid*, V.704–09**	***TnT*, 2159–64**
sic ubi diversis maria evertere procellis | hinc Boreas Eurusque, illinc niger imbribus Auster, | pulsa dies regnantque hiemes, venit aequoris alti | rex sublimis equis, geminusque ad spumea Triton | frena natans late pelago dat signa cadenti, | et iam plana Thetis, montesque et litora crescunt.	Ba he tra samail [in t]sluaig Grec in tan sin in muir acgarb anbthenach 7 na gaetha garba gat[s]nimacha gatmí 'ga cumsac 7 'ca com-buaidred gu n-udcith anfad garb gemreta in lear longach lanadbul as cach aird, cein co nn-eirig in ri uasal onorach .i. Nephtuin, co cuireand ina tast 7 ana teigli hi.
So when Boreas and Eurus on one side, Auster with his black rains on the other have upheaved the sea with their diverse blasts, the day is banished and storms rule; then comes the king of the deep aloft on his horses, twofold Triton swimming alongside	Now the appearance of the Greek host at that time was like a wild and strong sea with the rough withe-twisting withe-breaking winds commingling and disturbing it, so that the ship-covered very huge main appeared on every hand as a rough winter tempest, until

the foamy bridles gives signal far and wide to the falling waters. And now Thetis is flat, mountains and shores increase.	the noble honourable king, that is, Neptune, arises to put it to silence and calm.

***Thebaid*, VI.386**	***TnT*, 2326–27**
ocior et patrio venit igne suisque sagittis.	[T]tanic mar seagnen tened no mar saigid a sreiṅg no co ranic i coillid Nem.
[M]ore swiftly than his father's flame and his own arrows.	[H]e came like a thunderbolt or like an arrow from string till he reached the wood of Nemea.

***Thebaid*, VI.521**	***TnT*, 2401–03**
volat ocior Euro.	[R]ochomgres a eocho 'na diaid coma luaithigther re sidi ṅglasfuar ṅgaithi inn-a[i]msir gairb gemrid a deini 7 a dedgairi.
Swifter than the East Wind he flies.	[H]e urged on his horses after her so that his speed and quickness were as swift as a grey cold blast of wind in a rough winter season.

***Thebaid*, VI.602**	***TnT*, 2445–46**
effugit hic oculos rapida puer ocior aura Maenalius.	[B]a luaithither re sidi ṅgaithi ngemreta in tethad 7 in ten[n]ad ruc o chach.
The boy of Maenlus flees vision, swifter than the rapid wind.	[A]s swift as a blast of winter wind was the flight and speed [with which] he bore away from every one.

***Thebaid*, VI.750**	***TnT*, 2517–19**
fulmineas alte suspensi corpora plantis | erexere manus.	[C]o rothochbadar na lama lanchalma amal saeignena suaichinti solusda do chomamus cuirp araili.
Poised tall on their feet they raised hands like thunderbolts.	[T]ill they raised very brave hands like emblazoned bright thunderbolts, each to strike the other's body.

***Thebaid*, VI.777–78**	***TnT*, 2525–26**[678]
ut praeceps cumulo salit unda minantes | in scopulos et fracta redit, sic ille furentem | circumit expugnans.	[N]o amal timchillis tond mara moradbail cairrgi cuain 7 calaid.
As a wave gathers and leaps in a rush at threatening rocks, then returns broken, so he circles his angry adversary, storming his defense.	[O]r as a great huge sea wave encompasses rocks of a haven and harbour.

***Thebaid*, VI.787–88**	***TnT*, 2529–30**
non leo, non iaculo tantum indignata recepto | tigris.	Is andsin rodasachtaiged im Capaneus amal leoman londletarthi.

[678] See also *TnT*, 2524–25 under 'Irish simile – based on the *Thebaid*'.

[N]o lion was ever so indignant at a javelin's stroke, no tiger.	Then Capaneus became maddened like a wildly mangling lion.

***Thebaid*, VII.625–27**	***TnT*, 2807–11[679]**
Ventus uti primas struit intra nubila vires, | lenis adhuc, frondesque et aperta cacumina gestat, | mox rapuit nemus et montes patefecit opacos.	[C]o ma samalta gredon 7 glorbresmaidm na mbuiden mbodba mbuaidirthi sin a[c] comrith ri aroili amal bad i ind [fh]idbad bresbraenach billeach barrglas rothuited i ladraib glac 7 i llamaib aroili re gaidsnim na gaithi garbfuairi gemreta.
As when the wind builds up early strength within the clouds; gentle still, it carries leaves and open treetops, but then sweeps the forest away and lays bare the shaded hills.	[S]o that the clamour and the noisy crash of those furious turbulent troops rushing at one another were like as it were the great-dripping large-stemmed green-topped wood that had fallen into one another's cleft-forks and arms before the withe-twisting of the fiercely cold winter wind.

***Thebaid*, VIII.358–62**	***TnT*, 3037–41**
qualis ubi aversi secretus pabula caeli | Nilus et Eoas magno bibit ore pruinas, | scindit fontis opes septemque patentibus arvis | in mare fert hiemes; penitus cessere fugatae | Nereides dulcique timent occurrere ponto.	Nir-ba suaill an inni ris ba samalta comergi int [sh]luaig sin ac facbail na cathrach .i. re fuaim 7 re fothrand na fairrgi fondglaisi co crithnaig 7 co comgluais in cruindi comfhairsing re treathan na tond ac triall tar trachtaib in talman.
Even as when the secret Nile drinks with his great mouth the sustenance of a distant sky and eastern frosts, he splits his water's wealth and carries the winters to the sea over seven open plains; the Nereids retire routed to the depth, fearing to encounter a saltless main.	It was no mean thing, indeed, which the rising of that host resembled as they left the city, that is, the sound and subdued thunder of the green-surfaced sea, so that it shakes and convulses the wide globe with the storm of the billows as they roll over the strands of the earth.

***Thebaid*, VIII.407–11**	***TnT*, 3078–82**
non tanta cadentibus Haedis | aëriam Rhodopen solida nive verberat Arctos, | nec fragor Ausoniae tantus cum Iuppiter omni | arce tonat, tanta quatitur nec grandine Syrtis | cum Libyae Boreas Italos niger attulit imbres.	[C]omma breasmaidm buaidirtha crislach cocuasta na firmaméindti, amal concumaisctis na gaetha garbgluairi gad[s]nimacha in ceathar duil comairsiṅg co nn-aiceantaib examla, amal nobetis isin caip cumascda as ar-tebit ar tus co taibseanach .i. asin mais.
[N]ot so does the Bear lash airy Rhodope with solid snow when the Kids are setting, nor does Ausonia so resound when Jupiter thunders from all heaven, nor is Syrtis shaken by hail so heavy when black Boreas has brought Italian rains to Libya.	[S]o that the hollow dome of the firmament was a troubled crash, as if the rough-voiced withe-twisting winds mingled and confounded the four expansive elements with their diverse natures, as they used to exist in the confused mass out of which they were evidently hewn at first, that is, from the mass.

[679] See also *TnT*, 2811–14 under 'Irish simile – not based on *Thebaid* text'.

***Thebaid*, VIII.460–65**	***TnT*, 3135–37**
qualiter hiberni summis duo montibus amnes | franguntur geminaque cadunt in plana ruina: | contendisse putes uter arva arbustaque tollat | altius aut superet pontes; et cum una receptas | confundit iam vallis aquas, sibi quisque superbus | ire cupit, pontoque negant descendere mixit.	Ba he tra samail na desi sin, amal norethidis da buindi diana dileand a slebtib arda amreidi, co tochlait, 7 co timairgid leo turscara in talman, co linait na fangleanna fo ethib dib.
As when two winter rivers break from the mountaintops and fall with double rain into the plains, you might think they were in competition which should lift land and trees or overrun bridges in higher spate; and when one valley now receives both waters and is like to confound them, each proudly chooses to go his own way and they refuse to descend into the sea commingled.	Now this was the likeness of those two, as if two swift torrents of a flood rushed from lofty rugged mountains, so that the plantations of the earth were dug up and carried away by them, and the sloping herd-covered glens were filled with them.

***Thebaid*, VIII.474–75**	***TnT*, 3148**
velut primo tigris gavisa cruore | per totum cupit ire pecus.	[A]mal tigir croda confadaig 'ma cethraib cominda.
[A]s a tigress rejoicing in her first kill is fain to go through the whole flock.	[L]ike a cruel furious tiger among much cattle.

***Thebaid*, VIII.572–76**	***TnT*, 3206–07**
sic Hyrcana leo Caspius umbra | nudus adhuc nulloque iubae flaventis honore | terribilis magnique etiamnum sanguinis insons, | haud procul a stabulis captat custode remoto | segne pecus teneraque famem consumit in agna.	[A]mal leoman londmer ua thretaib teicheacha in talman.
So a Caspian lion in Hyrcanian shade, still bare, not terrible in pride of yellow mane, innocent yet of mighty bloodshed, makes to raid an idle flock not far from the fold when their shepherd is away and consumes his hunger on a tender lamb.	[L]ike a raging mad lion upon the fleeing flocks of the earth

***Thebaid*, IX.91–94**	***TnT*, 3403–07**
ceu fluctibus obvia rupes, | cui neque de caelo metus et fracta aequora cedunt, | stat cunctis immota minis; fugit ipse rigentem | pontus et ex alto miserae novere carinae.	Et nir-ba suaill ni ris ba samalta eisium andsin .i. carrac thend thunidi i crichib cuain 7 calaith, 7 na tonda taebuaine in mara crithainbtheanaig cumascda 'ga trenbualad, 7 sisi gan scailiud gan scuchud reompu.
Like a rock fronting the waves: no fear has it from the sky, and the waters retire broken; it stands unmoved by any threat, the sea itself flees its hard face and from the deep hapless ships know it well.	And it was no insignificant thing that he resembled there, that is, a firm immovable rock in the confines of haven and harbour, with the green-sided waves of the storm-

	shaken troubled sea strongly beating upon it, and it unsplit and unmoved before them.

***Thebaid*, IX.242–47**	***TnT*, 3519–21**
qualis caeruleis tumido sub gurgite terror | piscibus, arcani quotiens devexa profundi | scrutantem delphina vident; fugit omnis in imos | turba lacus viridesque metu stipantur in algas; | nec prius emersi quam summa per aequora flexus | emicet et visis malit certare carinis.	Imasae-sium fuithib amal bleidmil moradbul muiridi ba bradanaib becca ballbreca, co scailit 7 co scanrit remi co hochraib cuan 7 calath.
Such panic seizes blue fish beneath a swollen flood when they see a dolphin searching the slopes of the secret depth; the whole shoal flees into the lowest pools and crowds in terror into the green seaweed, nor do they come out before he darts in curves upon the surface and chooses rather to race the ships he has espied.	He turned himself about upon them like a great huge sea-monster upon a speckled salmon till they were scattered and dispersed before him to the edges of harbours and havens.

***Thebaid*, IX.554–56**	***TnT*, 3676–78**
ruit haud alio quam celsa fragore | turris, ubi innumeros penitus quassata per ictus | labitur effractamque aperit victoribus urbem.	[C]oma samalta ri tor coimnert cloichi arna cruaidhbrisedh traethad in trenfir no in miledh sin ac toitim.
He falls with a crash like a lofty tower, when profoundly shaken by countless blows it collapses, opening a breached city to the victors.	[S]o that like a compact stone tower severly broken was the overthrow of that champion or soldier as he fell.

***Thebaid*, IX.739–43**	***TnT*, 3763–64**
ut leo, cui parvo mater Gaetula cruentos | suggerit ipsa cibos, cum primum crescere sensit | colla iubis torvusque novos respexit ad ungues, | indignatur ali, tandemque effusus apertos | liber amat campos et nescit in antra reverti.	[A]mal cuilen letarthach leoman ua tretaibh teithmeacha.
So a lion, to whom when small his Gaetulian dam herself brings bloody food, when first he has felt his neck increase with a mane and looked grimly at his new claws, scorns to be fed and dashing out at last to freedom loves the open plains nor thinks of returning to the den.	[A]s a mangling lions' whelps attacks fleeing flocks.

***Thebaid*, X.414–19**	***TnT*, 4017–19**
ut lea, quam saevo fetam pressere cubili | venantes Numidae, natos erecta superstat, | mente sub incerta torvum ac miserabile frendens; | illa quidem turbare globos et frangere morsu | tela queat, sed prolis amor	'[A]mal leoman lanfhergach risna gabaid gaisgedaig arna chrad 'ma chuilenaib, conid cuma leis bas 7 betha d' fagbail

crudelia vincit | pectora, et a media catulos circumspicit ira.	
So a lioness that has newly whelped, beset by Numidian hunters in her cruel den, stands upright over her young, gnashing her teeth in grim and piteous wise, her mind in doubt; she could disrupt the groups and break their weapons with her bite, but love for her offspring binds her cruel heart and from the midst of her fury she looks round at her cubs.	[L]ike a full-angry lion which warriors do not tackle after its anguish about its cubs, so that death and leaving life do not matter to it

***Thebaid*, X.537–39**	***TnT*, 4113–15**
qualiter aut Malean aut alta Ceraunia supra | cessantes in nube sedent nigrisque leguntur | collibus et subitae saliunt in vela procellae: | talis Agenoris Argivum exercitus armis | obruitur.	[C]or-bó comdluith ré cethaib cruaidi clothneachta a n-airm 7 a n-ilfhacbair ag buain dar aigthib sciath 7 dar cathbarraib cruaidi na nGreg.
As tempests sit idly in cloud above Malea or lofty Ceraunia, gather on the darkling hills, and suddenly leap against the sails, so is the Argive army overwhelmed by Agenorean arms.	[V]arious sharp weapons were as thick as hard showers of hailstones striking over the faces of the shields and over the hard helmets of the Greeks.

***Thebaid*, X.864–69**	***TnT*, 4237–38**
amnis ut incumbens longaevi robora pontis | assiduis oppungnat aquis; iam saxa fatiscunt | emotaeque trabes: tanto violentior ille | (sentit enim) maiore salo quassatque trahitque | molem aegram, nexus donec celer alveus omnes | abscidit et cursu victor respirat aperto.	[A]mal charraig coimnert iter buindedaib ruadha rabarta na sæbsruth aga sitladh.
So a river pressing upon the timbers of an ancient bridge batters it with ceaseless waters; already stones show gaps and beams are dislodged; all the more violently does the river (for he knows) shake and pull the faltering mass in mightier surge until the swift channel has severed all the joints and victoriously takes breath in open course.	[L]ike a firm rock among the red rushing torrents of the eddies playing upon him.

***Thebaid*, X.915–17**	***TnT*, 4267–68**
stygias rupisse catenas | Iapetum aut victam supera ad convexa levari | Inarimen Aetnamve putes.	.i. feib co ngluaised firmaimint asa slatrach 7 asa suidiugud.
You might think Iapetus had broken his Stygian chains or vanquished Inarime or Aetna was rising to the vault above.	[T]hat is, as if it were moving the firmament out of its foundation and position.

***Thebaid*, XI.437–38**	***TnT*, 4469–71**
non verba magis suadentia frangunt | accensos sumptisque semel conatibus obstant, | quam Scytha curvatis erectus fluctibus umquam | Pontus Cyaneos vetuit concurrere montes.	Ní mó trá dochualadar-san sin na ralabairthea risin muir duasanaig turcarthaig can anad da glór 7 da gredan timcheall an betha.
His words of persuasion no more change their fiery mood or check their enterprise once resolved than Scythian Pontus raised up in arching waves ever forbade the Cyanean Rocks to clash.	Now no more did they listen to that than had it been spoken to the pursuing waif-strewn sea that ceases not from its noise and clamour round the world.

Close translation with scholium

***Thebaid*, I.193–94**	***TnT*, 227–32**
qualiter hunc gelidus Boreas, hinc nubifer Eurus | vela trahunt, nutat mediae fortuna carinae. | heu dubio suspensa metu tolerandaque nullis | aspera sors populis! hic imperat, ille minatur.	Oir is e ar samail-ne, mar bis long luchtmar lanadbul occa tuargan o dib gaethaib condtrardaib cona fitir cia gaeth risa rachad, uair is adbul a imned 7 a eccomnart duind *a* beith ua rigi 7 ua rigsmacht in rig ac buileam .i. Ethiocles, [7] ua tamach 7 ua tomaitheam in rig araill .i. Polinices.
[E]ven as chill Boreas pulls canvass one way and cloudy Eurus another and the vessel's fate wavers between (alas harsh lot, hanging in doubtful suspense, too hard for any folk to bear!); the one commands, the other threatens.	For this is a simile of us, as it were a great capacious full vast ship being beaten by two contrary winds so that it knows not with which wind it should go, for vast is the suffering and weakness *from* being under the kingship and kingly rule of the king we are with, that is, Eteocles, and the extortion *and* threat of the other king, that is, Polynices.

***Thebaid*, II.469–75**	***TnT*, 866–78**
Oeneae vindex sic ille Dianae | erectus saetis et aduncae fulmine malae, | cum premeret Pelopea phalanx, saxa obvia volvens | frataque perfossis arbusta Acheloia ripis, | iam Telmona solo, iam stratum Ixiona linquens | te, Meleagre, subit: ibi demum cuspide lata | haesit et obnixo ferrum laxauit in armo.	[C]o debil amal tanig an torc tren adbal allaidh dochuir Déan d'indrad 7 do sugad crich na Calidoine, ar ba ferg le can idbairt do denam di do lucht na Cailidoine, co n-eirged a guairi gairblíath gaisideach amal fhidbaid osa cind contaidli[g]dis saig(n)ena solusta asa fiaclaib croma cruaidgera ima leiccnib langranda re glondbeimnig a claideam no a clomair an trath contu-indsned ara cheili hé contachlad 7 contógluaiseadh cairrgi troma tuinidi an talman 7 fualascada fada na fidbaidi a heochairimlib srotha Achileus antan contuairgidis sealgaireada sirluatha gasraidi Greg cor-fhagaib an torc sin Talimon taraheis 7 co ratrascair an coraid curata Ixion co ramarb an milid morchalma Me[l]iagér ua deoid hé.

So Oenean Diana's avenger, proud with his spines and the thunderbolt of his curving jaw, as the Pelopean band presses him hard, rolling rocks in his path and broken trees from Achelous' perforated banks, now leaves Telamon stretched on the ground, now Ixion, and turns on Meleager. Here at last he stops at thrust of spear and loosens the steel in his struggling shoulder.	And when daring distinguished Tydeus had spoken in that way on the threshold of the king's house, he came forward swiftly and inauspiciously as came the strong huge wild-boar which Diana sent to devastate and to swallow up the confines of Calydon. For she was angry that no sacrifice was offered to her by the people of Calydon. So that his rough grey hairy bristles rose like a wood above his head, so that bright lightnings gleamed from his curved hard and sharp tusks about his very hideous jaws, with a deadly smiting of his tusks or his jaws when he would crush them together, so that he would dig up and root out heavy fixed rocks from the earth and the long branches of the wood from the outer edges of the river Achelous, when the ever-swift hunters of the young warriors of Greece were beating [them] so that boar left Telamon behind him, and overthrew the warlike warrior Ixion, until the greatly daring soldier Meleager slew him at last.

***Thebaid*, II.563–64**	***TnT*, 943–45**
qualis in adversos Lapithas erexit inanem | magnanimus cratera Pholus.	[A]mail an tilcoma tendtachair rodibraic Polus mear mormenmnach aran laechraid Laipiteagda ar bansib Piratous.
[L]ike great–hearted Pholus hoisting an empty mixing bowl against his Lapith adversaries.	[L]ike the hard-hitting goblet which reckless high-spirited Pholus threw at the Lapithean hero-folk at Pirithous' nupitals.

***Thebaid*, III.594–97**	***TnT*, 1284–1301**
it clamor ad auras, | quantus Tyrrheni gemitus salis, aut ubi temptat | Enceladus mutare latus; super igneus antris | mons tonat: exudant apices, fluctusque Pelorus | contrahit, et sperat tellus abrupta reverti.	[C]oma coma samalta i[n] nuall sin 7 tulborb fogragad na cruinni comairdi ac athcumsgugad don choraid curata .i. Encheladus, da sleibtib sarmora na Sigili srotaidi. Et is amlaid innister co rugad an corad sin fa sleibtib na Sigili .i. daine mera mileata badar an tus na haimsiri 7 is i comairli rochindsed, tocht do togail nime 7 rigi do gabail. Et o 'dchualadar *na* dee sin .i. Ioip 7 Apaill 7 na dei a[r] chena, dochuirsedar cath risna coradaib sin 7 ríu seig aderthái míc an talman ara truma 7 ara talmaigeacht. Ramebaid orra an cath sin, 7 rochenglaid 7 rachuibrigid risna deib iad, 7 dochuiread fer dib fa shliab Athna. Et is ed innister an trath chuireas cor no culscal de, conseideann sruth casracha teinead a taeb ant sleibi, 7 roceanglaid andsin Enceladus bá

	tri sleibtib na Sigili .i. Lilbeus 7 Pacinnus 7 Pilorus, 7 antan concumscaigenn an coraid sin, crithfograigid 7 cruinne na firmaiminnti uili, 7 ba cosmail rissin nuallgair na nGreg ag iarraid thachair risna Tiabanda.
The shouting goes aloft, loud as the groaning of Tyrrhenian waters or as when Enceladus tries to change his side; above, the fiery mountain thunders in its caverns, the peaks gush forth, Pelorus contracts his waves, and the severed earth hopes to return.	[S]o that shout was like the rough rude noise of the level world at being convulsed by the warlike warrior, that is, Enceladus, from his very great mountains of watery Sicily. And so it is told that that warrior was born among the mountains of Sicily, that is, there were wild warlike men at the beginning of time, and this is the counsel they resolved on, to go and sack heaven and seize sovereignty. And when the gods, that is, Jupiter, Apollo and all the gods heard that, they gave battle to those warriors, and against them those who were called the sons of the earth because of their heaviness and earthiness. That battle went against them, and they were bound and constrained by the gods there; and one of them was placed under mount Etna. And it is said that when he twists or turns from [under] it, a stream of fiery hail escapes blows out from the side of the mountain; and Enceladus was bound there under the three mountains of Sicily, that is, Lilybaeus, Pachynus, and Pelorus; and when that warrior moves, the globe of the whole firmament trembling resounds. And like that was the yell of the Greeks as they sought battle with the Thebans.

***Thebaid*, VI.320–25**	***TnT*, 2287–88**
sic ignea lora | cum daret et rapido Sol natum imponeret axi, | gaudentem lacrimans astra insidiosa docebat | nolentesque teri zonas mediamque polorum | temperiem: pius ille quidem et formidine cauta, | sed iuvenem durae prohibebant discere Parcae.	[A]mal roreithset eich greini Faóætan mic Apaill.
So when the Sun gave his child the fiery throngs and placed him in the rapid car, with tears he taught the happy youth of treacherous stars and zones unwilling to be trodden and the temperate region between the poles; loving was he and cautious in his fear, but the cruel Parcae would not suffer the young man to learn.	[A]s coursed the horses of the sun, Phaethon's, son of Apollo.

Descriptive interpretation

***Thebaid*, I.535–36**	***TnT*, 478–79**
mirabile visu, | Pallados armisonae pharetrataeque ora Dianae | aequa ferunt, terrore minus.	[T]angadar na hingina cæma comcosmaili sin isin tech.
A wonder to behold, they bear faces matching armed Pallas' and quiver-bearing Diana's, all but the terror.	[T]hose lovely maidens perfectly alike came into that house.

***Thebaid*, II.165–66**	***TnT*, 661–62**
nec plura tuus despexerat Oeneus | foedera Pisaeisque socer metuendus habenis.	[U]air tancas iarum a Fair 7 a hÉobail 7 a hAchís 7 a Sparta 7 a Pissa 7 a hElis do thochmarc na n-ingen sin.
[N]or did your Oeneus despise more matches or that other father feared for his Pisean bridle.	For they have sent from Pheraeus, Oebalian towns, Achaea, Sparta, Pisa, and Elis to court these maidens.

***Thebaid*, II.236–43**	***TnT*, 728–35**
non secus ac supero partiter si cardine lapsae | Pallas et asperior Phoebi soror, utraque telis, | utraque torva genis flavoque in vertice nodo, | illa suas Cyntho comites agat, haec Aracyntho; | tunc, si fas oculis, non umquam longa tuendo | expedias, cui maior honos, cui gratior, aut plus | de Iove; mutatosque velint transumere cultus, | et Pallas deceat pharetras et Delias cristas.	Oir ni rabadar ar tuind talman in tan sin da ingin uad ind-rucu andat sin. Air is amlaid batar-sum, cendchaema cosmaile sulglasa saineamla gruadchorcra gribglana belchorcra banamla detgela dianim lamgela laichthecha co sliastaib semidib, co colpthaib cumaidib, co traigthib tenaidib, so salaib sarchruindi. Cid tra acht gid fata robeth fer fiamach firglic ac mideamain na n-ingen sin, ni fhitir ca ragu doberad dib ara caime 7 ara cosmaili.
It was as though Pallas and Phoebus' sterner sister, both grim of weapons and of eye, blond braid upon their heads, were to glide together from the sky above leading their companions, the one from Cynthus, the other from Aracynthus; then could you never by long gazing (were your eyes permitted) determine which had the grander grace, which the more charming, which had more of Jupiter. And should they wish to change dress with each other, Pallas would beseem the quiver and Delia the helmet crest.	For there were not on earth's surface at that time two maidens that were more worthy than those. For thus were they with beautiful heads alike, grey-eyed, distinguished, crimson-cheeked, fine and bright, crimson-lipped, womanly, with white teeth, stainless, white-handed, high bred, with fine thighs, shapely calves, slender feet, and finely rounded heels. So, though a modest shrewd man were long contemplating those maidens he would not know what choice he should make between them owing to their beauty and similarity.

***Thebaid*, II.411–14**	***TnT*, 831**
iacto velut aspera saxo | comminus erigitur serpens, cui subter inanes | longa sitis latebras totumque agitata per artus |	Roghabh ferg mor Eitiocles.

convocat in fauces et squamea colla venenum.	
So an angry snake rears up close at the cast of a stone; long his thirst down in his hollow den; stirred through his body, it calls all his venom into his jaws and scaly neck.	Great anger seized Eteocles.

***Thebaid*, II. 559–60**	***TnT*, 941–42**
quod vix plena cervice gementes | vertere humo et muris valeant inferre iuvenci.	[A] roibi feidm seisrigi sonairti do tharraig a tendtaib talman.
[W]hich groaning steers with full strength of neck could scarce tear from the ground and bring within walls.	[W]hich would have required the effort of a powerful team of six to drag it from the earth's fastness.

***Thebaid*, II.595–601**	***TnT*, 983–84**
non aliter Getica, si fas est credere, Phlegra | armatum immensus Briareus stetit aethera contra, | hinc Phoebi pharetras, hinc torvae Pallados angues, | inde Pelethroniam praefixa cuspide pinum | Martis, at hinc lasso mutata Pyracmoni temnens | fulmina, cum toto nequiquam obsessus Olympo | tot queritur cessare manus.	Robo neimneach nemthoglaidi 7 fá fosaid an firlaech sin ag srainead na sochaidi uada amach co cian.
Not otherwise in Getic Phlegra, if we may believe it, did vast Briareus stand against heaven in arms, despising Phoebus' quiver on one side and the snakes of frowning Pallas on another, there Mars' steel–tipped Pelethronian pine, here thunderbolt after thunder bolt till Pyracmon grows weary; assailed in vain by all Olympus, he complains that so many hands are idle.	Virulent, undaunted, and steadfast was that true hero as he drove the multitude far out from him.

***Thebaid*, III.530**	***TnT*, 1231–33**
'ceu muris valloque tenent.'	'Et tuic let,' ar se, 'na Tiabanda tætencha i sidh in cathrachaib comdaingnib trésna helaib nemluaimneacha,' ar se.
'[A]s though behind walls and rampart.'	'And do thou understand by the unwinging swans the silent taciturn Thebans at peace in the strong cities,' said he.

***Thebaid*, IV.494–99**	***TnT*, 1651–53**
qualis Gaetulae stabulantem ad confraga silvae | venator longo motum clamore leonem | exspectat firmans animum et sudantia nisu | tela premens; gelat ora pavor gressusque tremescunt, | quis veniat quantusque, sed horrida signa frementis | accipit et caeca metitur murmura cura.	Et rogob aduath adbol Ethiocles ri dasacht Tiresias ac iarraid a itgi ar muntir ṅdemnaig n-ifrind.

Even as a hunter waits for a lion that long shouting rouses from his den in the rough of a Gaetulian forest, steeling his courage and gripping his weapon that sweats with the effort; fear freezes his face and his steps tremble as he wonders what creature approaches, how big- but he hears the roaring, dread sign, and measures the sound in blind trepidation.	And vast horror seized Eteocles at Tiresias' madness in asking his request of the devilish people of Hades.

***Thebaid*, IV.744–45**	***TnT*, 1758–59**
ceu flavam Libyen desertaque pulveris Afri | collustrent nullaque umbratam nube Syenen.	[C]o Síen siblach siruar.
They might as well scour yellow Libya and the sandy deserts of Africa and Syene that no cloud ever shades.	[T]o meandering ever-cool Syene.

***Thebaid*, IV.801–03**	***TnT*, 1788–90**
sic tener Odrysia Mavors nive, sic puer ales | vertice Maenalio, talis per litora reptans | improbus Ortygiae latus inclinabat Apollo.	Et ua haineolach d' imgabail uilc in macan sin ua d' iarraid maithiusa an tan sin.
Such was tender Mars in the Odrysian snow, such the winged boy on Maenalus' summit, such mischievous Apollo as he crawled along the shore and tilted Ortygia's side.	And that little boy was ignorant at that time either how to avoid evil or how to seek good.

***Thebaid*, VI.51–53**	***TnT*, 2208–09**
ille quoque affatus non mollius audit amicos | quam trucis Ionii rabies clamantia ponto | vota virum aut tenues curant vaga fulmina nimbos.	Ni chualaig-sium sin tra re confad na cumad 7 re fiuchud na fergi.
Lycurgus too is no more mollified by well-meant words than the rage of the fierce Ionian heeds the clamour of men's prayers upon the deep or wandering lightnings thin showers.	But he heard him not in that owing to the tempest of his grief and the boiling of his wrath.

***Thebaid*, VII.393–97**	***TnT*, 2715–16**
perspicuas sic luce fores et virgea pastor | claustra levat, dum terra recens; iubet ordine primo | ire duces, media stipantur plebe maritae; | ipse levat gravidas et humum tractura parentum | ubera, succiduasque apportat matribus agnas.	Roordaich curadu croda re cathugud inn agaid gaiscedach Grec amuich [a]n-echtair.
So the shepherd raises the doors and wattle barriers when the light shines through, while the earth is fresh; he bids the leaders go first, the flock of ewes is packed in the middle; he himself raises the pregnant ones and the	He ordered brave warriors to fight against Greek champions away outside.

udders of parents like to trail the ground and brings the stumbling lambs to their dams.	

***Thebaid*, VII.560–61**	***TnT*, 2766–69**
rursus mutata trahuntur | agmina consiliis: subito ceu turbine caeli | obvius adversum Boreae Notus absulit aequor.	Rothairmisc tra in scel sin fa Polinices dul isin cathraig 7 gan sid re brathair, 7 rolinsad na Greic uili o feargaib glemorgarba risna Tiauandaib, o 'dochondcadar crechta 7 ilgona Thid.
Once more the army changes, swayed by his counsel; as with a sudden revolution in the sky South Wind meets North Wind and takes the adverse sea.	Now that tale prevented Polynices going into the city and making peace with his brother; and all the Greeks were filled with very greatly exasperated feelings of wrath at the Thebans, when they saw Tydeus' wounds and his many sores.

***Thebaid*, VIII.209–10**	***TnT*, 2986–87**
ceu flammas ac dona rogo tristesque rependant | exsequias mollique animam tellure reponant.	Et rochindsead sollamna saineamla 7 idbarta onoracha do denam do.
[A]s though they were giving fire and gifts and sad obsequies to his pyre and consigning his soul to soft earth.	And they resolved that divers festivals and honourable sacrifices should be made to him.

***Thebaid*, IX.82–85**	***TnT*, 3394–95**
ducitur amisso qualis consorte laborum | deserit inceptum media inter iugera sulcum | taurus iners colloque iugum deforme remisso | parte trahit, partem lacrimans sustentat arator.	Et robui Polinices co hanband enirt andsin re crad na cumad 7 re truma na toir[r]si.
He is led like a bull who has lost the partner of his toils; listlessly in mid acre he deserts the furrow he has begun and with slackened neck drags one part of the unhandsome yoke while the weeping ploughman bears the other.	And Polynices remained there feebly and weakly owing to the anguish of grief and the weight of sorrow.

***Thebaid*, IX.189–95**	***TnT*, 3475–78**
sic ubi Maura diu populatum rura leonem, | quem propter clausique greges vigilantque magistri, | pastorum lassae debellavere cohortes: | gaudet ager, magno subeunt clamore coloni, | praecerpuntque iubas immaniaque ora recludunt | damnaque commemorant, seu iam culmine fixus | excubat, antiquo seu pendet gloria luco.	Et o rasiacht cucu amlaid sin corp Tith, roiadsad immi ass cach aird, 7 darindset guingaland [de] amal nobeith beo, 7 ba buaid ṅgaiscid ris trenfher dib rofordergad a armu asa apach.
So when a lion that has long ravaged the Moorish countryside, on whose account flocks are shut in and their masters keep vigil, has been warred down by weary troops	And when the body of Tydeus had reached them thus, they surrounded it from every direction and made an enemy mutilation of him as if he were alive, and it was a victory

of shepherds, the land is glad, the husbandmen come with loud clamour, plucking at his mane, opening his monstrous jaws, telling of their losses, whether he now keeps watch impaled under a roof or hangs the glory of an ancient grove.	of valour to the champion among them who could redden his weapons in Tydeus' entrails.

***Thebaid*, IX.220–22**	***TnT*, 3500–01**
semifer aëria talis Centaurus ab Ossa | desilit in valles: ipsum nemora alta tremescunt, | campus equum.	[C]o rocrithnaigsedar fiachtega firglana 7 tulcha tondglasa na Teibi re trethan.
So a half-brute Centaur leaps from airy Ossa down to the valley; the lofty forests tremble at himself, the plain at the horse.	[S]o that the very bright plains and the green-surfaced hills of Thebes shook with tumult.

***Thebaid*, X.42–48**	***TnT*, 3890–91**
rabidi sic agmine multo | sub noctem coiere lupi, quos omnibus agris | nil non ausa fames longo tenuavit hiatu: | iam stabula ipsa premunt, torquet spes irrita fauces | balatusque tremens pinguesque ab ovilibus aurae; | quod superest, duris affrangunt postibus ungues pectoraque, et siccos minuunt in limine dentes.	[R]rouatar co fuirechair ac fledhugud andsin an dá la conici sin.
So a great pack of ravening wolves meet at nightfall, whose gaping jaws throughout the countryside all-venturing hunger has long starved; now they press on the very sheepfolds, hope denied tortures their gullets, and the quavering bleat and odours of fatness from the pens; nothing is left but to break their claws and chests against the hard posts and grind dry fangs upon the threshold.	[T]hey had been watchfully feasting there the two days previously.

***Thebaid*, X.601**	***TnT*, 4142–44**
tunc in speciem serpentis inanem | ancipiti gyro volvi frangique rubore | demonstrat dubio.	Is andsin adces taidbsi nathrach ar barr uachtarach na lasrach roeirig dona teintib.
Then she shows him that it rolls with two-way ring into the phantom likeness of a snake and breaks in dubious red.	Then was seen the vision of a serpent on the highest point of the flame that rose from the fires.

***Thebaid*, X.854–55**	***TnT*, 4207–08**
ceu suprema lues urbi facibusque cruentis | aequatura solo turres Bellona subiret.	Cid tra acht fa trascairthi tuir 7 tigi dona cairrgib comora rodibraigead an trenfer sin isin cathraig.
[A]s though final destruction threatened the city and Bellona were come with bloody brand to level her towers with the soil.	Nay, towers and houses were overthrown by the very great stones which that champion continued to cast into the city.

Descriptive interpretation with scholium

***Thebaid*, I.475–77**	***TnT*, 440–43**
quanta partitum extrema protervo | Thesea Pirithoo, vel inanem mentis Oresten | opposito rabidam Pylade vitasse Megaeram.	'[U]air is iad seo da fher dec rop ferr comaltus 7 comand isin bith .i. Achilles 7 Patrocolus 7 Orestis 7 Pilades 7 Nisus 7 Eorialus 7 Castur 7 *Pullux* 7 *Tesisius* 7 Pirathous 7 Polinices 7 Tid.'
[A]s made Theseus share the worst with reckless Pirithous, or Pylades face Megaera's fury to shield a maddened Orestes.	'[F]or these twelve men were the best in close friendship and fellowship in the world, that is, Achilles and Patroclus, Orestes and Pylades, Nisus and Euryalus, Castor and *Pollux*, *Theseus* and Pirithous, Polynices and Tydeus.'

Replacement Irish Simile

***Thebaid*, I.419–20**	***TnT*, 397–98**
telorum aut grandinis instar | Rhipaeae, flexoque genu vacua ilia tundunt.	Cid tra acht ba setrech sirchalma serig na tresa troma trenbemeand doberead cach dib uar a chele, cumma samalta ri tenid tricheamruaid laindrigda lasamnachta na n-arm 7 na n-fhilfaebar re frasugud na fola fordeirgi re *corpaib* 7 cendaib na milead moradbul sin, 7 ba tend in tuargain dobertis ara n-indib 7 ara n-ochtaib da ngluinib comnarta comfhillti i cliabaib 7 i compur a chele, comdais salcha sleamna na sraiteada sin re siliud 7 re snigi na fola a crechtaib na curad sin, 7 roshinset-sum a llama adannta aindscelcha do chrecht-nugud 7 da chruad-chascrad chuirp a chele.
[L]ike darts or Rhipaean hail, or on bended knee pound unprotected loins.	Moreover strong, ever brave, and fierce were the heavy strong smiting assaults that each of them continued to deliver upon the other, so that resembling a red-rushing blazing fire were the flamings of the arms and the many edges while causing the crimson blood to shower from the bodies and heads of those mighty soldiers, and shrewd was the smiting they continued dealing on their heads and on their bosoms with their strong knees bent on each other's chests and breasts, so that foul and slippery were those streets with the dropping and dripping of the blood from the wounds of those heroes, and they stretched out their flaming combatant hands to wound and cruelly to mangle the bodies of each other.

***Thebaid*, VI.854–57**	***TnT*, 2562–64**
Alpini veluti regina cupressus | verticis urguentes cervicem inclinat ad Austros | vix sese radice tenens, terraeque propinquat, | iamdudum aetherias eadem reditura sub auras.	[C]o ma samalta re seolchrand primluingi moiri no re ralaig roaird os mincrandaib firbeca fidbaidi Ageleius os cind Tit andsin aca thairnim 7 'ga trascrad.
Like the cypress, queen of the Alpine summit, that inclines her neck in the urging South Wind, scarce holding herself by the root, and nears the earth, presently to return to the air on high the same as before.	[S]o that like a mast of a great principal ship, or a very lofty oak over very small saplings of a wood was Agylleus above Tydeus then, while pulling down and overthrowing him.

***Thebaid*, VII.638–39**	***TnT*, 2822–23**
ceu nondum anima defectus utraque | cum sua Centaurus moriens in terga recumbit.	[R]odluthaiged in chathirgal comrumach cor-ba dluithither re cleith lenad arna landluthud in lini sleg semnach sithfhata.
[A]s a Centaur not yet failing of both his lives sinks dying on his own back.	[A]s close as a stop-hurdle after being quite closed was the line of riveted long-extending spears.

***Thebaid*, IX.10–11**	***TnT*, 3347**
stimulis quam si turbata sepuclris | ossa patrum monstrisque datae crudelibus urnae.	[A]mal bad fialchairdi diles dearbrathar do iad uili.
[A]s though their fathers' bones had been disturbed in their tombs and their urns given to cruel monsters.	[A]s if they all were to him a proper family relationship of brothers.

***Thebaid*, IX.508–09**	***TnT*, 3642–43**
ceu pecoris custos, subiti torrentis iniquis | interceptus aquis?	'[B]ás mar so do imirt ormsa, mar dodhenta ar midlaech.'
[L]ike a shepherd caught in the hostile waters of a sudden torrent?	'[T]hat you do inflict a death like this on me, as might be done upon a coward.'

***Thebaid*, XI.520–23**	***TnT*, 4508–09**
ut nocte rates, quas nubilus Auster | implicuit, frangunt tonsas mutantque rudentes, | luctataeque diu tenebris hiemique sibique, | sicut erant, imo pariter sedere profundo.	[C]o rathuitsed da n-echaib, feib tiastais ré haill no re hanborus.
Even as at night ships that the cloudy South Wind has interlocked with each other break their oars and entangle their rigging and after long struggle with darkness and storm and themselves sink together even as they are onto the ocean floor.	[S]o that they fell from their horses as they might have fallen down on a rock or because of insecurity.

***Thebaid*, XI.530–34**	***TnT*, 4514–16**
fulmineos veluti praeceps cum comminus egit | ira sues strictisque erexit tergora saetis: | igne tremunt oculi, lunataque dentibus uncis | ora sonant; spectat pugnas de rupe propinqua | venator pallens canibusque silentia suadet.	[A]mar da leoman loindmera, no mar da thiger trena thnuthacha, no mar da nathraig níata nemneacha.
Even as a rush of anger drives boars like thunderbolts against each other, raising their backs in spiky bristles; their eyes quiver with fire, their crescent faces resound with their hooked tusks; the hunter watches the bout from a nearby rock, paling and bidding his dogs be silent.	[L]ike two eager rash lions, or two strong furious tigers, or like two combative venomous snakes.

***Thebaid*, XII.733–36**	***TnT*, 4862–65**
ceu pater Edonios Haemi de vertice Mavors | impulerit currus, rapido mortemque fugamque | axe vehens, sic exanimes in terga reducit | pallor Agenorida.	[C]oma samalta ré foscad fidbaidi firairdi anellchroda comdorcha craind na sleigi sin, 7 coma samaltha re rind roglan ruithnigthech soillsi sl*endand na s*-leigi sin, consoillsiugad an mag ara rabadar na sluaig.
[A]s though father Mavors were driving his Edonian chariot from Haemus' summit bearing death and rout on his rapid wheels, so pale terror leads back the panicking sons of Agenor.	[S]o that the shafts of that spear were like the shadow of a very high cruel-tooled very dark wood, and the blades of that spear were like a very bright radiant point of light, so that the plain on which the hosts stood was lighted up.

Replacement Irish metaphor

***Thebaid*, IX.532–36**	***TnT*, 3658–59**
procumbit, Getico qualis procumbit in Haemo | seu Boreae furiis putri seu robore quercus | caelo mixta comas, ingentemque aëra laxat: | illam nutantem nemus et mons ipse tremescit | qua tellure cadat, quas obruat ordine silvas.	[C]oma coill comdluith a corp dibh.
He falls forward, as an oak falls on Getic Haemus by the fury of Boreas or its own rotting wood, an oak that mingled its foliage with the sky, and leaves a vast void of air; the forest and the mountain itself tremble as it nods – on what earth will it fall, what woods will it overwhelm in sequence?	[S]o that his body was a thick wood of them.

Not translated – corresponding to lacuna in Adv.MS.72.1.8

***Thebaid*, II.323–30**	
veluti dux taurus amata | valle carens, pulsum solito quem gramine victor | iussit ab erepta longe mugire iuvenca, | cum profugo placuere tori cervixque recepto | sanguine magna redit fractaeque in pectora quercus, | bella cupit pastusque et capta armenta reposcit | iam pede, iam cornu melior; pavet ipse reversum | victor, et attoniti vix agnovere magistri: | non alias tacita iuvenis Teumesius iras | mente acuit.	Like a leader bull banished from his beloved valley, whom a victor has driven from his familiar meadow and condemned to low afar from his stolen heifer; but when the fugitive's sinews are to his liking and his great neck back again full-blooded and oaks shatter against his breast, he craves battle and reclaims pasture and captured herd, stronger now than ever in hoof and horn - the victor himself fears him returned and the wondering herdsmen scarce recognize: not otherwise does the young Teumesian hone his wrath in the silence of his heart.

***Thebaid*, III.22–32**	
ac velut ille | fluctibus Ioniis Calabrae datus arbiter alno | (nec rudis undarum, portus sed linquere amicos | purior Olenii frustra gradus impulit astri), | cum fragor hiberni subitus Iovis, omnia mundi | claustra tonant multusque polos inclinat Orion, | ipse quidem malit terras pugnatque reverti, | fert ingens a puppe Notus, tunc arte relicta | ingemit et caecas sequitur iam nescius undas.	Like a skipper given charge of a Calabrian craft on Ionian waters (no stranger he to the waves, but a clear rising of the Olenian star deceived him into quitting the friendly harbour), when comes a sudden crash in the wintry sky and all the confines of the firament thunder and Orion lustily bends the poles; he himself would fain be ashore and struggles to go back, but a mighty gale astern bears him on; then abandoning his skill, he groans and follows the blind waves, no longer knowing aught.

***Thebaid*, III.45–52**	
haud aliter saltu devertitur orbus | pastor ab agrestum nocturna strage luporum, | cuius erile pecus silvis inopinus abegit | imber et hibernae ventosa cacumina lunae. | luce patent caedes; domino perferre recentes | ipse timet casus, haustaque informis harena | questibus implet agros, stabulique silentia magni | odit et amissos longo ciet ordine tauros.	So leaves the pasture a herdsmen bereft of his charge by wild wolves slaughtering by night; a sudden downpour and the gusty horns of the winter moon had driven his master's cattle away into the woods and in the morning the carnage lies plain to view; he fears to tell his lord in person what has happened; ugly with dust unscraped, he fills the fields with his laments, hating the silence of the great stall, and summons in long series the lost bulls.

***Thebaid*, III.56–57**	
qualis bello supremus apertis | urbibus, aut pelago iam descendente carina.	[L]ike the last yell when warring cities are opened up or at sea when a ship goes down.

***Thebaid*, III.140–46**	
Thessalis haud aliter bello gavisa recenti, | cui gentile nefas hominem revocare canendo, | multifida attollens antiqua lumina cedro | nocte subit campos versatque in sanguine functum | vulgus et explorat manes, cui plurima busto | imperet ad superos: animarum maesta queruntur | concilia, et nigri pater indignatur Averni.	Not otherwise does a woman of Thessaly, whose nation's crime it is to bring the dead back to life by spells, visit the fields by night rejoicing in a recent battle, and holding high her splintered torch of ancient cedarwood turn the lifeless throng over in their blood and explore the dead— to which carcass should she give most orders in the upper world? The sorrowful conclaves of the souls complain and dark Avernus' father is wroth.

***Thebaid*, III.253–54**	
mortalia credas | pectora.	You might have thought them mortal hearts.

***Thebaid*, III.255–59**	
non secus ac longa ventorum pace solutum | aequor et imbelli recubant ubi litora somno, | silvarumque comas et abacto flamine nubes | mulcet iners aestas; tunc stagna lacusque sonori | detumuere, tacent exusti solibus amnes.	'Twas as when the sea lies becalmed, winds keep a long peace, and shores stretch in strifeless slumber, while idle summer soothes forest leaves and clouds, breezes dismissed; the meres and loud lakes have subsided, the sun-scorched rivers make no sound.

Not translated[680]

***Thebaid*, I.105–06**	
qualis per nubila Phoebes | Atracia rubet arte labor.	[A]s when Atracian art makes labouring Phoebe blush through clouds.

***Thebaid*, I.421–24**	
non aliter quam Pisaeo sua lustra Tonanti cum redeunt crudisque virum sudoribus ardet | pulvis; at hinc teneros caveae dissensus ephebos | concitat, exclusaeque exspectant praemia matres: | sic alacres odio nullaque cupidine laudis | accensi incurrunt, scrutatur et intima vultus | unca manus penitusque oculis cedentibus intrat.	Even as when his lustral terms return to the Pisaean Thunderer and the dust warms with the crude sweat of men – but yonder the discord of the crowd spurs on the tender youths and their excluded mothers wait for the prizes: so, lively with hate nor inspired by any desire for glory, they rush in. The clawing hand searches the inmost places of the visage and enters deep into the yielding eyes.

***Thebaid*, I.479–81**	
ventis ut decertata residunt | aequora, laxatisque diu tamen aura superstes | immoritur velis.	[A]s a sea for which the winds have fought falls to rest; and a long, lingering breeze yet dies upon the drooping canvas.

[680] Following Shackleton Bailey's edition of the *Thebaid*, I do not include English translations to bracketed lines IV.716–22 and VI.719–21.

***Thebaid*, I.485–87**	
illius in speciem quem per Teumesia tempe | Amphitryoniades fractum iuvenalibus annis | ante Cleonaei vestitus proelia monstri.	[L]ike to him that in Teumesos' valley Amphitryon's son in youthful years broke and clothed himself therewith before his bout with the monster of Cleonae.

***Thebaid*, II.81–88**	
qualia per Rhodopen rabido convivia coetu | Bristones aut mediae ponunt convallibus Ossae; | illis semianimum pecus excussaeque leonum | ore dapes et lacte novo domuisse cruorem | luxus; at Ogygii si quando afflavit Iacchi | saevus odor, tunc saxa manu, tunc pocula pulchrum | spargere et immerito sociorum sanguine fuso | instaurare diem fetasque reponere mensas.	Such feasts do Bistones in wild assembly lay out on Rhodope or amid Ossa's vales; for them a sheep half living, food shaken from lions' jaws, and blood diluted with new milk is luxury; but if ever the fierce odour of Ogygian Iacchus breathes upon them, then they love to scatter stones and winecups, and after spilling guiltless blood of comrades to begin the day afresh and reset the festal boards.

***Thebaid*, II.105–07**	
tu, veluti magnum si iam tollentibus Austris | Ionium nigra iaceat sub nube magister | immemor armorum versantisque aequora clavi, | cunctaris.	You dally, like a skipper lying prone beneath a dark cloud when the winds are already raising the great Ionian, unmindful of his tackle and sea-churning rudder.

***Thebaid*, II.193–95**	
nec minus haec laeti trahimus solacia, quam si | praecipiti convulsa Noto prospectet amicam | puppis humum.	No less happily do we take this solace than if a ship wrenched by a rushing gale were to see friendly land ahead.

***Thebaid*, II.491–93**	
ceu castra subire | apparet aut celsum crebri arietis ictibus urbis | inclinare latus.	'Twas as if they were about to attack a camp or topple a city's high flank with frequent blows of battering ram.

***Thebaid*, II.553–54**	
ut clausas indagine profert | in medium vox prima feras.	[A]s when a first shout brings net-encircled beasts into the open.

***Thebaid*, III.356**	
ceu turrem validam aut artam compagibus urbem.	[L]ike a strong tower or a close-framed city.

***Thebaid*, III.432–39**	
qualis ubi Aeolio dimissos carcere Ventos | dux prae se Neptunus agit magnoque volentes | incitat Aegaeo; tristis comitatus eunti | circum lora fremunt Nimbique	Even as Neptune their leader drives the Winds before him discharged from their Aeolian prison and urges them nothing loath over the great Aegean; a gloomy company

Hiemesque profundae | Nubilaque et vulso terrarum sordida fundo | Tempestas: dubiae motis radicibus obstant | Cyclades, ipsa tua Mycono Gyaroque revelli, | Dele, times magnique fidem testaris alumni.	roars about reins as he goes, Squalls and deep Storms and Clouds and murky Hurricane that tears earth's foundation; tottering on their shaken roots the Cyclades oppose, Delos herself fears to be torn from her Myconos and Gyaros and calls on her great foster son for succour.

***Thebaid*, III.604–05**	
unus ut e silvis Pholoës habitator opacae | inter et Aetnaeos aequus consurgere fratres.	Like a denizen of darkling Pholoë from out of the forest or one that might rise equal among Aetna's brethren.

***Thebaid*, IV.24–31**	
sic ubi forte viris longum super aequor ituris, | cum iam ad vela Noti et scisso redit ancora fundo, | haeret amica manus: certant innectere collo | bracchia, manantesque oculos hinc oscula turbant, | hinc magni caligo maris, tandemque relicti | stant in rupe tamen; fugientia carbasa visu | dulce sequi, patriosque dolent crebrescere ventos.	So when men are haply about to go far overseas, when the wind is at the sails and the anchor returns from the ploughed bottom, a fond company clings; they vie to twine their arms about a neck, kisses and the great sea's fog blur their flowing eyes; at last abandoned, they will yet stand on a cliff; 'tis sweet to follow the fleeing canvas with their gaze and they grieve that their country's winds blow stronger.

***Thebaid*, IV.312**	
pernicior alite vento.	Swifter than winged wind.

***Thebaid*, IV.550–51**	
qualis, si crimina demas, | Colchis et Aeaeo simulatrix litore Circe.	Like to a Colchian, but for the crimes, and deceiving Circe on the shore of Aea.

***Thebaid*, IV.705–10**	
sic ubi se magnis refluus suppressit in antris | Nilus et Eoae liquentia pabula brumae | ore premit, fumant desertae gurgite valles | et patris undosi sonitus exspectat hiulca | Aegyptos, donec Phariis alimenta rogatus | donet agris magnumque inducat messibus annum.	So when ebbing Nile hides himself in his great caverns and holds in his mouth the liquid nurture of an eastern winter, the valleys smoke forsaken by the flood and gaping Egypt awaits the sounds of her watery father, until at their prayers he grants sustenance to the Pharian fields and brings on a great harvest year.

***Thebaid*, IV.716–22**
[sic Hyperionios cum lux effrena per orbem | rapta ruit Phaëthontis equos, magnumque laborem | discordes gemuere poli, dum pontus et arva | stellarumque ruunt crines, non annibus undae, | non lucis mansere comae, sed multus ubique | ignis, ubique faces et longa fluminis instar | indiget Aegaeon deceptus imagine ripae.]

***Thebaid*, IV.789–92**	
qualis Berecyntia mater, | dum parvum circa iubet exsultare Tonantem | Curetas trepidos; illi certantia plaudunt | orgia, sed magnis resonat vagitibus Ide.	Like the Berecyntian Mother as she bids the trembling Curetes dance around the tiny Thunderer; they strike their mystic drums in competition, but Ide resounds with his mighty wails.

***Thebaid*, V.11–16**	
qualia trans pontum Phariis defensa serenis | rauca Paraetonio decedunt agmina Nilo, | cum fera ponit hiems: illae clangore fugaci, | umbra fretis arvisque, volant, sonat avius aether. | iam Borean imbresque pati, iam nare solutis | amnibus et nudo iuvat aestivare sub Haemo.	Even as the noisy swarms sheltered overseas by Pharian calm leave Paraetonian Nile when wild winter subsides; they fly with fleeing clamour, a shadow over sea and land, the pathless ether resounds; now they are fain to suffer North Wind and rains, swim in melted rivers, and pass summer under naked Haemus.

***Thebaid*, V.92–94**	
insano veluti Teumesia Thyias | rapta deo, cum sacra vocant Idaeaque suadet | buxus et a summis auditus montibus Euhan.	Like a Teumesian Thyiad seized by the frantic god, when the rites call and Ida's boxwood urges and Euhan is heard from the mountain tops.

***Thebaid*, V.144–46**	
Amazonio Scythiam fervere tumultu | lunatumque putes agmen descendere, ubi arma | indulget pater et saevi movet ostia Belli.	'Twas as though Scythia was afire with Amazonian tumult and the crescent-shielded host descending when their father allows them arms and opens the gates of cruel War.

***Thebaid*, V.231–33**	
ut fera, quae rabiem placido desueta magistro | tardius arma movet stimulisque et verbere crebro | in mores negat ire suos.	Like a wild beast that under a gentle master has lost the habit of fury and is slow to show fight, refusing to resume its old ways despite goads and many a lash.

***Thebaid*, V.261–64**	
gelida non saevius Ossa | luxuriant Lapitharum epulae, si quando profundo | Nubigenae caluere mero: vix primus ab ira | pallor, et impulsis surgunt ad proelia mensis.	In no crueler fashion do the feasts of the Lapithae on chill Ossa run riot when the cloud-born ones have grown warm with deep draughts of wine; scarce comes anger's first pallor and they upset the tables and rise to battle.

***Thebaid*, V.330–34**	
sic ubi ductorem trepidae stabulique maritum, | quem penes et saltus et aduncae gloria gentis, | Massylo frangi stupuere sub	So when trembling heifers see thunderstruck the leader and husband of the stall, to whom belong the pastures and the glory of the

hoste iuvencae, | it truncum sine honore pecus, regemque peremptum | ipse ager, ipsi amnes et muta arbusta queruntur.	horned folk, broken under a Massylian foe; the herd goes maimed, its pride departed; the very land, the very rivers, and the mute trees bemoan the slain king.

***Thebaid*, V.349**	
densarum pecudum aut fugientum more volucrum.	[L]ike thronging cattle or fleeing birds.

***Thebaid*, V.529–33**	
quantus ab Arctois discriminat aethera Plaustris | Anguis et usque Notos alienumque exit in orbem; | quantus et ille sacri spiris intorta movebat | cornua Parnasi, donec tibi, Delie, fixus | vexit harundineam centeno vulnere silvam.	Large as the Serpent that divides the heavens on from the Artic Wains and passes out to the South Winds and an alien hemisphere; or as he that moved the horns of sacred Parnassus as he twined them with his coils until you pierced him, Delian, and he bore an arrow forest with a hundred wounds.

***Thebaid*, V.543**	
qualia non totas peragunt insomnia voces.	[L]ike the unfinished utterances of a dream.

***Thebaid*, V.560–61**	
quo turbine bellica quondam | librati saliunt portarum in claustra molares.	[A]s when poised millstones leap against barred gates in war.

***Thebaid*, V.593**	
fulminis in morem.	[L]ike a thunderbolt.

***Thebaid*, V.723**	
illa velut rupes immoto saxea visu, | haeret et expertis non audet credere divis.	She stays fixed like a stony rock, her eyes unmoving, not daring to trust the gods she has experienced.

***Thebaid*, VI.19–24**	
ceu primum ausurae trans alta ignota biremes, | seu Tyrrhenam hiemam seu stagna Aegea lacessant, | tranquillo prius arma lacu clavumque levesque | explorant remos atque ipsa pericula discunt; | at cum experta cohors, tunc pontum irrumpere fretae | longius ereptasque oculis non quaerere terras.	Even as ships about to venture for the first time across unknown seas whether they challenge Tyrrhene storm or spreading Aegean, first test rigging and helm and light oars on a calm lake and learn actual perils; but when their crews are trained, then confidently they break far into the main nor does their gaze seek the lost land.

***Thebaid*, VI.107–10**	
non sic eversa feruntur | Ismara cum fracto Boreas caput extulit antro, | non grassante	Not so is Ismara overturned and carried off when Boreas lifts his head from his fractured cavern nor does nocturnal fire more swiftly

Noto citius nocturna peregit | flamma nemus.	destroy a forest under the South Wind's assault.

***Thebaid*, VI.114–17**	
ut cum possessas avidis victoribus arces | dux raptare dedit, vix signa audita, nec urbem | invenias; ducunt sternuntque abiguntque feruntque | immodici, minor ille fragor quo bella gerebant.	As when a commander gives a captured town over to greedy victors to plunder, scarce is the signal heard and the city is gone; unrestrained they drag and flatten, drive off, carry off; with less noise they made war.

***Thebaid*, VI.186–92**	
non secus ac primo fraudatum lacte iuvencum, | cui trepidae vires et solus ab ubere sanguis, | seu fera seu duras avexit pastor ad aras; | nunc vallem spoliata parens, nunc flumina questu, | nunc arbusta movet vacuosque interrogat agros; | tunc piget ire domum, maestoque novissima campo | exit et oppositas impasta avertitur herbas.	As when a bull calf whose strength is tremulous, his vigour drawn only from the udder, is cheated of his first milk, carried off by a wild beast or a shepherd for the cruel altar; now the robbed mother stirs valley and rivers and trees with her complaint, questioning the empty fields; then she cares not to go home, she is at last to leave the sad meadow, and turns away unfed from the grass before her.

***Thebaid*, VI.253–54**	
non aut Ephyraeo in litore tanta | umquam aut Oenomai fremuerunt agmina circo.	Hosts so great never clamoured on Ephyre's shore or on Oenomaus' ring.

***Thebaid*, VI.298–300**	
ceu praepete cursu | confligant densae volucres aut litore in uno | Aeolus insanis statuat certamina ventis.	'Twas as though a swarm of birds were to compete in rapid career or Aeolus to set up a race for the wild winds on one shore.

***Thebaid*, VI.306**	
et hiberno par inconstantia ponto.	[A]s changeful as a winter sea.

***Thebaid*, VI.407**	
amnibus hibernis minor est, minor impetus igni.	Not so swift the rush of winter rivers, not so swift the rush of fire.

***Thebaid*, VI.408–09**	
tardius astra cadunt, glomerati tardius imbres, | tardius e summo decurrunt flumina monte.	More slowly fall stars, more slowly balled reins, more slowly run torrents down from a mountaintop.

***Thebaid*, VI.422–23**	
gelida non crebrior exsilit Arcto | grando, nec Oleniis manant tot cornibus imbres.	Not thicker leaps hail from the icy Bear, nor stream so many rains from Olenian horns.

***Thebaid*, VI.451–53**	
lassa veluti ratione magister | in fluctus, in saxa ruit nec iam amplius astra | respicit et victam proiecit casibus artem.	Even as a helmsman whose science is weary rushes on waves, on rocks, nor any more regards the stars; his skill overborne by chance, he has flung it away.

***Thebaid*, VI.457**	
bella geri ferro levius, bella horrida, credas; | is furor in laudes.	You would think war was a-waging, cruel war, only without steel, so mad are they for glory.

***Thebaid*, VI.483–84**	
ut Siculas si quando rates tenet aestus et ingens | Auster agit, medio stant vela tumentia ponto.	So it may hap that a tide holds fast Sicilian ships while a mighty South Wind urges them on; the swelling sails stand in mid sea.

***Thebaid*, VI.521–22**	
volat ocior Euro, | ceu modo carceribus dimissus in arva solutis.	Swifter than the East Wind he flies, as though the barriers had just been lifted and he discharged into the open.

***Thebaid*, VI.578–82**	
sic ubi tranquillo perlucent sidera ponto | vibraturque fretis caeli stellantis imago, | omnia clara nitent, sed clarior omnia supra | Hesperus exercet radios, quantusque per altum | aethera, caeruleis tantus monstratur in undis.	So when the stars shine in a tranquil sea and the semblance of the spangled sky quivers in the waters, all brightly gleam but brighter than all Hesperus plies his rays, showing as large in the dark–blue waves as in the high heavens.

***Thebaid*, VI.596–97**	
credas e plebe Cydonum | Parthorumque fuga totidem exsiluisse sagittas.	You might think that that many arrows had leapt forth from a Cydonian crowd or a flight of Parthians.

***Thebaid*, VI.598–601**	
non aliter, celeres Hyrcana per avia cervi | cum procul impasti fremitum accepere leonis, | sive putant, rapit attonitos fuga caeca metusque | congregat, et longum dant cornua mixta fragorem.	Not otherwise when swift stags in the Hyrcanian wilderness hear at a distance the roar of a hungry lion, or think they hear, blind flight sweeps them in panic and fear crowds them together; their mingling horns clash long and loud.

***Thebaid*, VI.665–67**	
qualis Bistoniis clipeus Mavortis in arvis | luce mala Pangaea ferit solemque refulgens | territat incussaque dei grave mugit ab hasta.	Even as in Bistonian fields the shield of Mars strikes Pangaeus with an evil glare and shining back affrights the sun and deeply booms with the impact of the god's spear.

***Thebaid*, VI.685–88**	
sic cadit, attonitis quotiens avellitur astris, | Solis opaca soror; procul auxiliantia gentes | aera crepant frustraque timent, at Thessala victrix | ridet anhelantes audito carmine bigas.	So falls the dark sister of the Sun when plucked away from the astonished stars; the people beat bronze to aid and idly fear, but the woman of Thessaly, her spell heard, laughs victorious at the panting steeds.

***Thebaid*, VI.714–15**	
consedit viridesque umeros et opaca theatre | culmina ceu latae tremefecit mole ruinae.	[A]s of a great mass of falling masonary, sets the green shoulders and shady tops of the theatre a-tremble.

***Thebaid*, VI.716–18**	
quale vaporifera saxum Polyphemus ab Aetna | lucis egente manu tamen in vestigia puppis | auditae iuxtaque inimicum exegit Ulixen.	Like the rock that Polyphemus propelled from smoky Aetna with sightless hand, yet on the track of the ship (he heard it) and close to his enemy Ulixes.

***Thebaid*, VI.719–21**
[sic et Aloidae, cum iam calcaret Olympum | desuper Ossa rigens, ipsum glaciale ferebant | Pelion et trepido sperabant iungere caelo.]

***Thebaid*, VI.753–54**	
hic, quantum Stygiis Tityos consurgat ab arvis, | si torvae patiantur aves, tanta undique pandit | membrorum spatia et tantis ferus ossibus exstat.	The one displays from every angle the spaces of his limbs, standing fierce with mighty bones, large as Tityos rising from Stygian fields, if the grim birds would let him.

***Thebaid*, VI.799–81**	
sic ubi longa vagos lassarunt aequora nautas | et signum de puppe datum, posuere parumper | bracchia: vix requies, iam vox citat altera remos.	So when long sea have tired wandering sailors, at a sign from the poop they drop their arms for a space, but hardly have they rested when a second cry rouses the oars.

***Thebaid*, VI.806–07**	
clamorem Inachidae, quantum non litora, tollunt, | non nemora.	The sons of Inachus raise a shout, no shore or forest the like.

***Thebaid*, VI.864–67**	
non sic ductores gemini gregis horrida tauri | bella movent; medio coniunx stat candida prato | victorem expectans, rumpunt obnixa furentes | pectora, subdit amor stimulos et vulnera sanat.	Not so savagely do two bulls, chiefs of the herd, make grim warfare, while the fair consort stands in mid meadow expecting the victor; furiously they break straining breasts, love applies his goads and heals their wounds.

***Thebaid*, VI.868–69**	
fulmineo sic dente sues, sic hispida turpes | proelia villosis ineunt complexibus ursi.	Thus boars with lightning tusks, thus ugly bears join bristling conflict with their shaggy embraces.

***Thebaid*, VI.880–85**	
haud aliter collis scrutator Hiberi, | cum subiit longeque diem vitamque reliquit, | si tremuit suspensus ager subitumque fragorem | rupta dedit tellus, latet intus monte soluto | obrutus, ac penitus fractum obtritumque cadaver | indignantem animam propiis non reddidit astris.	Like the searcher of an Iberian hill, when he has gone below and left daylight and life afar; if the suspended ground trembles and the ruptured earth comes down with a sudden crash, he hides inside, buried by the fallen mountain, nor does the corpse, utterly smashed and crushed, return his indignant spirit to its proper stars.

***Thebaid*, VI.893–96**	
Herculeis pressum sic fama lacertis | terrigenam sudasse Libyn, cum fraude reperta | raptus in excelsum, nec iam spes ulla cadendi, | nec licet extrema matrem contingere planta.	So, as the story goes, sweated the Libyan son of earth gripped in Hercules' arms, when his trick was discovered and he snatched into the air; no hope now of falling and he cannot touch his mother with the tip of his toe.

***Thebaid*, VII.86–89**	
ut si quando ruit debellatasque relinquit | Eurus aquas, pax ipsa tumet pontumque iacentem | exanimis iam volvit hiems: nondum arma carinis | omnia, nec toto respirant pectore nautae.	As when the East Wind plunges, leaving the vanquished waters, the very calm is timid and the exhausted storm now rolls a flattened sea; ships do not yet have all their rigging and sailors do not breathe freely quite.

***Thebaid*, VII.139–44**	
sic litora vento | incipiente fremunt, fugitur cum portus; ubique | vela fluunt, laxi iactantur ubique rudentes; | iamque natant remi, natat omnis in aequore summo | ancora, iam dulcis medii de gurgite ponti | respicitur tellus comitesque a puppe relicti.	So shores resound as the wind rises and men flee the harbour; everywhere sails are streaming, everywhere loose tackle is tossing, and now oars float, every anchor floats on the water's surface, now from mid sea they gaze back at sweet land and the comrades they have left astern.

***Thebaid*, VII.223–26**	
ut, cum sole malo tristique rosaria pallent | usta Noto, si clara dies Zephyrique refecit | aura polum, redit omnis honos, emissaque lucent | germina, et informes ornat sua gloria virgas.	So rose beds fade, scorched by a harmful sun and an unkind South Wind, but if the day clears and Zephyr's breeze revive, the sky, all the beauty returns, the buds open and gleam, the formless twigs are adorned in their glory.

***Thebaid*, VII.286–87**	
quales, cum pallida cedit | bruma, renidentem deducunt Strymona cycni.	[L]ike swans escorting bright Strymon when pale winter yields.

***Thebaid*, VII.436–40**	
ac velut ignotum si quando armenta per amnem | pastor agit, stat triste pecus, procul altera tellus | omnibus et late medius timor: ast ubi ductor | taurus init fecitque vadum, tunc mollior unda, | tunc faciles saltus, visaeque accedere ripae.	So when a herdsmen is driving cattle through an unknown river, the herd stand dismayed; to all the other bank seems far away and wide the fear between; But when the leader bull goes and makes a ford, then the water is gentler, the leaps easy, and the banks seem to draw closer.

***Thebaid*, VII.477**	
ferens ramumque oleae cum velleris atri | nexibus, Eumenidum velut antiquissima	She carries an olive branch with twines of black wool like the eldest of the Furies.

***Thebaid*, VII.529–32**	
quales ubi tela virosque | pectoris impulsu rabidi stravere leones, | protinus ira minor, gaudentque in corpore capto | securam differe famem.	As when raging lions by impact of their breasts have shewn men and weapons to the ground, their anger all at once diminishes and they are happy to defer their hunger sure of satisfaction on a captured body.

***Thebaid*, VII.582–83**	
ceu duo diverso pariter si fulmina caelo | rupta cadant longumque trahant per nubila crinem.	As though two thunderbolts bursting together from the distant sky were falling, dragging their long hair through the clouds.

***Thebaid*, VII.599–600**	
templa putes urbemque rapi facibusque nefandis | Sidonios ardere lares, sic clamor apertis | exoritur muris.	You might think that temples and city were being sacked and Sidonian home aflame with wicked torches, such clamor rises from the opened walls.

***Thebaid*, VII.670–74**	
qualis ubi primam leo mane cubilibus atris | erexit rabiem et saevo speculatur ab antro | aut cervum aut nondum bellantem fronte iuvencum, | it fremitu gaudens; licet arma gregesque lacessant | venantum, praedam videt et sua vulnera nescit.	As a lion rouses his first fury at daybreak in his dark lair and spies from his grim cavern a stag or a steer with brow not yet for fighting; off he goes joyously roaring, though arms and bands of hunters challenge, sees his prey and knows not of his wounds.

***Thebaid*, VII.709–10**	
innumeram ferro plebem, ceu letifer annus | aut iubar adversi grave sideris, immolat umbris | ipse suis.	Like a season of plague or the grievous ray of a hostile star, with his steel he immolates a numberless multitude to his own shade.

***Thebaid*, VII.744–49**	
sic ubi nubiferum montis latus aut nova ventis | solvit hiems aut victa situ non pertulit aetas, | desilit horrendus campo timor, arva virosque | limite non uno longaevaque robora secum | praecipitans, tandemque exhaustus turbine fesso | aut vallem cavat aut medios intercipit amnes.	So when a cloudy mountainside is loosened by the winds of a new winter or its age fordone by decay can no longer give support, it leaps down upon the plain, a horrific terror, sweeping with it fields and men and ancient timber in more swathes than one; and at last exhausted in its weary rush either hollows out a valley or blocks rivers in mid flow.

***Thebaid*, VII.791–93**	
non aliter caeco nocturni turbine Cauri | scit peritura ratis, cum iam damnata sororis | igne Therapnaei fugerunt carbasa fratres.	Not otherwise does a ship at night in a northwester's blind turmoil know that she will perish when the brethren of Therapnae have fled sails doomed by their sister's fire.

***Thebaid*, VII.804–07**	
sic ubi navales miscet super aequora pugnas | contempto Bellona mari, si forte benigna | tempestas, sibi quisque cavent, ensesque recondit | mors alia, et socii pacem fecere timores.	So when Bellona mingles naval battles on the waters, contemning the sea, if a kindly storm arises, each looks to himself and a different death sheather their swords and shared fears make peace.

***Thebaid*, VIII.71–72**	
sit qui rabidarum more ferarum | mandat atrox hostile caput.	Let there be a savage who like a rabid wild beast gnaws his enemy's head

***Thebaid*, VIII.82–83**	
non fortius aethera vultu | torquet et astriferos inclinat Iuppiter axes.	Not more powerfully does Jupiter twist heaven with his frown and bend the starry poles.

***Thebaid*, VIII.124–26**	
ut leo, Massyli cum lux stetit obvia ferri, | tunc iras, tunc arma citat; si decidit hostis, | ire supra satis est vitamque relinquere victo.	So a lions summons his anger and his weapons when a flash of Massylian steel stands before him, but if his enemy falls, he is content to pass over him and leave life to the vanquished.

***Thebaid*, VIII.212–14**	
sic fortes Minyas subito cum funere Tiphys | destituit, non arma sequi, non ferre videtur | remus aquas, ipsique minus iam ducere venti.	[S]o when Tiphys forsook the brave Minyae by his sudden death, the tackle seemed no longer to obey nor the oar to endure the water, the very winds seemed to draw with less force.

***Thebaid*, VIII.237–39**	
ceu modo gemmiferum thyrso populatus Hydaspen | Eoasque domos nigri vexilla triumphi | Liber et ignotos populis ostenderet Indos.	As though Liber, after ravaging jewel-bearing Hydaspes and the dwellings of the East with his wand, were displaying to the peoples the banners of a dusky triumph and the Indians they had never known.

***Thebaid*, VIII.255–58**	
qualis post longae Phineus ieiunia poenae, | nil stridere domi volucresque ut sensit abactas | (necdum tota fides), hilaris mensaque torosque | nec turbata feris tractavit pocula pennis.	So Phineus after the fasting of his long punishment, perceiving that the screaming in the house had stopped and the birds been driven away (but not yet quite believing), cheerfully handled tables and couches and wine cups undisturbed by savage wings.

***Thebaid*, VIII.267–70**	
sic ubi per fluctus uno ratis obruta somno | conticuit, tantique maris secura iuventus | mandavere animas: solus stat puppe magister | pervigil inscriptaque deus qui navigat alno.	So when at sea a ship has fallen silent sunk in a single sleep and the trusting crew have handed over their lives careless of the great sea, the helmsman stands wakeful in the poop alone, he and the god who sails on the vessel inscribed with his name.

***Thebaid*, VIII.286–93**	
sicut Achaemenius solium gentesque paternas | excepit si forte puer, cui vivere patrem | tutius, incerta formidine gaudia librat, | an fidi proceres, ne pugnet vulgus habenis, | cui latus Euphratae, cui Caspia limina mandet; | sumere tunc arcus ipsumque onerare veretur | patris equum visusque sibi nec sceptra capaci | sustentare manu nec adhuc implere tiaran.	So if a boy of Achaemenes' line, for whom it were safer that his father lived, chance to take over the paternal throne and peoples, he balances joy with doubtful fear: are his nobles loyal, will the people not fight the reins, to whom shall he entrust Euphrates' bank or the Caspian threshold? Then he scruples to take the bow and mount his father's very horse, thinks his hand still too small to wield the sceptre and his head to fill the diadem.

***Thebaid*, VIII.369–72**	
liquido velut aethere nubes | invida Parrhasiis unum si detrahat astris, | truncus honor Plaustri, nec idem riget inge reciso | axis, et incerti numerant sua sidera nautae.	So in the liquid ether, if an envious cloud were to withdraw one of the Parrhasian stars, the glory of the Wain is marred, the frozen pole is not the same with one fire cut away, the uncertain sailors count their stars.

***Thebaid*, VIII.423–27**	
ut ventis nimbisque minax cum solvit habenas | Iuppiter alternoque affligit turbine mundum: | stat caeli diversa acies, nunc fortior Austri, | nunc Aquilonis hiems, donec	So when threatening Jupiter gives rein to winds and squalls, plaguing the world with alternate tempests, heaven's armies stand opposed; now Auster's storm is stronger, now Aquilo's, till in the battle of the gales

pugnante procella | aut nimiis hic vicit aquis, aut ille sereno.	either the one wins with overplus of water or the other with clear sky.

***Thebaid*, VIII.532–35**	
qualis saetigeram Lucana cuspide frontem | strictus aper, penitus cui non infossa cerebro | vulnera, nec felix dextrae tenor, in latus iras | frangit et expertae iam non venit obvius hastae.	So a wild boar whose bristling brow has been grazed by a Lucanian point (the wound has not dug deep into his brain and the hand's aim failed to follow through) swerves his rage to one side nor comes to face the sampled spear.

***Thebaid*, VIII.544–47**	
sic ulmus vitisque, duplex iactura colenti, | Gaurano de monte cadunt, sed maestior ulmus | quaerit utrique nemus, nec tam sua bracchia labens | quam gemit assuetas invitaque proterit uvas.	So an elm and a vine, double loss to the husbandman, fall from Mount Gaurus, but the elm is the sadder of the two and craves the lost forest for both, lamenting not its own boughs in its slide so much as the familiar grapes and loath to crush them.

***Thebaid*, VIII.593–96**	
innumeris veluti leo forte potitus | caedibus imbelles vitulos mollesque iuvencas | transmittit: magno furor est in sanguine mergi | nec nisi regnantis cervice recumbere tauri.	So a lion who has made countless killings passes by unwarlike calves and soft heifers; his madness is to sink in mighty blood and lie only on the neck of the reigning bull.

***Thebaid*, VIII.616–20**	
sic Pandioniae repetunt ubi fida volucres | hospitia atque larem bruma pulsante relictum, | stantque super nidos ueterisque exordia fati | annarrant tectis: it truncum ac flebile murmur; | verba putant, voxque illa tamen non dissona verbis.	So when Pandion's birds return to their trusted quarters and the home they left when winter drove them forth, they stand over the nest and tell the dwelling their tale of ancient woe; they take their broken, tearful murmur for words, and indeed that utterance sounds not unlike words.

***Thebaid*, VIII.674–76**	
nec segnius ardens | occurrit, niveo quam flammiger ales olori | imminet et magna trepidum circumligat umbra.	[A]s eager as a flame-bearing bird that hovers over a snowy swan, enveloping the frightened creature with his mighty shadow.

***Thebaid*, VIII.691–94**	
sic densa lupum iam nocte sub atra | arcet ab apprenso pastorum turba iuvenco; | improbus erigitur contra, nec cura vetantes | impetere: illum, illum, semel in quem venerat, urguet.	So in the dark of night a dense crowd of shepherds wards off a wolf from the steer he has caught; he rears against them obstinately, but cares not to go for those who bar his way and presses on him, only him who he had once attacked.

***Thebaid*, VIII.749–50**	
qualis ab Arcadio rediit Tirynthius antro | captivumque suem clamantibus intulit Argis.	So returned the Tirynthian from the Arcadian cavern and brought the captive boar to applauding Argos.

***Thebaid*, IX.27–31**	
non aliter subtexunt astra catervae | incestarum avium, longe quibus aura nocentem | aëra desertasque tulit sine funere mortes; | illo avidae cum voce ruunt, sonat arduus aether | plausibus, et caelo volucres cessere minores.	Not other do swarms of foul birds veil the stars when a breeze from afar has brought noxious air and deaths forsaken without burial; thither they rush in noisy greed, the lofty air is loud with flapping wings, and lesser birds retire from the sky.

***Thebaid*, IX.115–19**	
imbellem non sic amplexa iuvencum | infestante lupo tunc primum feta tuetur | mater et ancipiti circumfert cornua gyro; | ipsa nihil meteuns sexusque oblita minoris | spumat et ingentes imitatur femina tauros.	Not so does his dam enfold a defenceless calf, her firstborn, protecting him from a prowling wolf, and carries her horns in a circle, wheeling doubtfully; for herself she has no fear and foams unmindful of her lesser sex, a female imitating mighty bulls.

***Thebaid*, IX.141–43**	
Siculi velut anxia puppis | seditione maris nequiquam obstante magistro | errat et averso redit in vestigia velo.	So when the Sicilian sea fights itself, an anxious ship strays despite the helmsman's efforts and returns upon her tracks with averted sail.

***Thebaid*, IX.328–31**	
non Anthedonii tegit hospitis inguina pontus | blandior, aestivo nec se magis aequore Triton | exserit, aut carae festinus ad oscula matris | cum remeat tardumque ferit delphina Palaemon.	No more blandly does the sea cover the groin of the guest from Anthedon nor Triton rise higher from a summer sea, nor Palaemon when he hastens back to his dear mother's kiss and strikes his slow dolphin.

***Thebaid*, IX.360–62**	
fluctivagam sic saepe domum madidosque penates | Alcyone deserta gemit, cum pignora saevus | Auster et algentes rapuit Thetis invida nidos.	So often forsaken Halcyone laments her wave-wandering home and sodden house, when cruel Auster and jealous Thetis have stolen her children, her shivering nestlings.

***Thebaid*, IX.401–03**	
qualiter Isthmiaco nondum Nereida portu | Leucothean planxisse ferunt, dum pectore anhelo | frigidus in matrem saevum mare respuit infans.	So in Isthumus' haven men say the not yet Nereid Leucothea made lament, as her cold babe with panting breast spewed the cruel sea upon his mother.

***Thebaid*, IX.437–38**	
non Strymonos impia tanto | stagna cruore natant.	The impious pools of Strymon swim not with such gore.

***Thebaid*, IX.438–39**	
non spumifer altius Hebrus | Gradivo bellante rubet.	[F]oaming Hebrus reddens no higher when Gradivus wars.

***Thebaid*, IX.460–61**	
hinc atque hinc tumidi fluctus animosaque surgit | tempestas instar pelagi, cum Pliadas haurit | aut nigrum trepidis impingit Oriona nautis.	From this side and from that the swollen waves and the bold tempest rise like the main when it drains the Pleiads or thrusts black Orion upon affrighted sailors.

***Thebaid*, IX.523–25**	
ceu ventis alte cum elata resedit | tempestas, surgunt scopuli quaesitaque nautis | terra, et ab infestis descendunt aequora saxis.	[E]ven as, when a storm raised high by winds has abated, rocks arise and the land the sailors sought, the waters descend from the beetling cliffs.

***Thebaid*, IX.858–60**	
utque feri vectorem fulminis albus | cum supra respexit olor, cupit hiscere ripam | Strymonos et trepidas in pectora contrahit alas.	As a white swan, seeing above him the bearer of the fierce thunderbolt, wishes that Strymon's banks would open up and folds his trembling wings to his breast.

***Thebaid*, X.13–14**	
ceu mare per tumidum viduae moderantibus alni, | quas deus et casus tempestatesque gubernant.	Like vessels on a swelling sea widowed of their steersmen, which god and chance and tempest guide.

***Thebaid*, X.170–75**	
sic Phryga terrificis genetrix Idaea cruentum | elicit ex adytis consumptaque bracchia ferro | scire vetat; quatit ille sacras in pectora pinus | sanguineosque rotat crines et vulnera cursu | exanimat: pavet omnis ager, respersaque cultrix | arbor, et attoniti currum erexere leones.	So the Mother of Ida draws forth the bleeding Phrygian from her dread shrine nor lets him know that steel has devoured his arms; he brandishes the sacred pines against his breast, whirling his bloodstained locks, and deadens his wounds by running; all the land is terror-struck, the tree of worship is bespattered, the astonished lions raise up the chariot.

***Thebaid*, X.182–86**	
non secus amisso medium cum praeside puppis | fregit iter, subit ad vidui moderamina clavi | aut laterum custos aut quem penes obvia ponto | prora fuit: stupet	Even as when a ship has lost her skipper and stopped in mid voyage, there comes to guide the doubtful helm either the guardian of the sides or he whose care was the prow that fronts the main; the vessel herself is stunned.

ipsa ratis tardeque sequuntur | arma, nec accedit domino tutela minori.	Her tackle is slow to respond, the figurehead does not join a lesser master.

***Thebaid*, X.228–34**	
vertice sic Pholoës volucrum nutritor equorum, | cum fetura gregem pecoroso vere novavit, | laetatur cermens hos montis in ardua niti, | hos innare vadis, certare parentibus illos; | tunc vacuo sub corde movet, qui molle domandi | ferre iugum, qui terga boni, quis in arma tubasque | natus, ad Eleas melior quis surgere palmas.	So on Pholoë's top the rearer of fleet horses, when birth has renewed his stud in the cattle-teeming springtime, is happy to see some struggling up the mountain heights, some swimming in the waters, others vying with their parents; then his free mind asks which should be broken in to a gentle yoke, which will make good riding, which is born for arms and trumpets, which better fit to attain Elean palms.

***Thebaid*, X.246–48**	
non aliter moto quam si pater Aeolus antro | portam iterum saxo premat imperiosus et omne | claudat iter, iam iam sperantibus aequora ventis.	It was as though father Aeolus with his cavern in uproar were imperiously to place another rock against the door and close all passage, just when the winds are already expecting the sea.

***Thebaid*, X.288–92**	
Caspia non aliter magnorum in strage iuvencum | tigris, ubi immenso rabies placata cruore | lassavitque genas et crasso sordida tabo | confudit maculas, spectat sua facta doletque | defecisse famem.	Not otherwise does a Caspian tigress in the slaughter of great steers, when her rage has been appeased by measureless bloodshed and she has wearied her jaws and blurred her stripes with foul, thick gore, survey her deeds and grieve that her hunger fails.

***Thebaid*, X.373–75**	
sic, ubi nocturnum tonitru malus aethera frangit | Iuppiter, absiliunt nubes et fulgere claro | astra patent, subitusque oculis ostenditur orbis.	So when Jupiter in evil mood bursts the nightly heaven with his thunder, the clouds leap aside and the stars appear in the lightning flash and the world is suddenly displayed to our eyes.

***Thebaid*, X.458–62**	
volucrum sic turba recentum, | cum reducem longo prospexit in aëre matrem, | ire cupit contra summique e margine nidi | exstat hians, iam iamque cadat, ni pectore toto | obstet aperta parens et amantibus increpet alis.	So when a throng of fledgelings see their mother bird returning far away in the air, they would fain go to meet her and hang out from the top edge of the nest, gaping; they are just about to fall, did not the parent spread all her bosom to block them and rebuke them with loving wings.

***Thebaid*, X.470**	
qui tremor inicitur caeli de lampade tactis, | hic fixit iuvenem, pariterque horrore sub uno | vox, acies sanguisque perit.	A trembling such as as befalls those touched by fire from heaven seized the warrior and in one shudder he lost voice, sight, and strength.

***Thebaid*, X.511–12**	
quanta pariter cervice gementes | profringunt inarata diu Pangaea iuvenci.	[W]ith the strength of groaning bullocks that together break Pangaea's long unploughed soil.

***Thebaid*, X.574–79**	
sic ubi pumiceo pastor rapturus ab antro | armatas erexit apes, fremit aspera nubes, | inque vicem sese stridore hortantur et omnes | hostis in ora volant, mox deficientibus alis | amplexae flavamque domum captivaque plangunt | mella laboratasque premunt ad pectora ceras.	So when a shepherd has roused armed bees meaning to take plunder from their pumice cavern, the fierce cloud hums noisily, exhorting each other with their buzzing, and all fly at the enemy's face; then with failing wings they embrace lamenting their yellow home and captive honey, pressing to their bosom the laboured combs.

***Thebaid*, X.619**	
non secus ac torta traiectus cuspide pectus.	[A]s though a flying javelin had transfixed his breast.

***Thebaid*, X.622–23**	
Trinacria qualis | ora repercussum Libyco mare sumit ab aestu.	[L]ike as the Trinacrian shore receives the sea thrown back from Libyan surge.

***Thebaid*, X.646–49**	
sic Lydia coniunx | Amphitryoniaden exutum horrentia terga | perdere Sidonis umeris ridebat amictus | et turbare colus et tympana rumpere dextra.	So his Lydian wife smiled to see Amphitron's son stripped of the bristly hide, spoiling Sidonian garments with his shoulders and upsetting the distaffs and breaking the drums with his right hand.

***Thebaid*, X.674–75**	
fulminis haud citius radiis afflata cupressus | combibit infestas et stirpe et vertice flammas | quam iuvenis multo possessus numine pectus | erexit sensus letique invasit amorem.	Not more speedily does the cypress tree blasted by lightning rays drink the angry fires with stem and crest than the youth, overwhelmed by supernatural power, exalted his spirit and rushed on love of death.

***Thebaid*, X.820–26**	
sic aspera tigris | fetibus abreptis Scythico deserta sub antro | accubat et tepidi lambit vestigia saxi; | nusquam irae, sedit rabidi	So the fierce tigress whose cubs have been stolen lies forsaken in her Scythian cave and licks the prints on the warm stone; gone is

feritasque famesque | oris, eunt praeter secura armenta gregesque: | aspicit illa iacens; ubi enim quibus ubera pascat | aut quos ingenti premat exspectata rapina?	her rage, quiet the wildness and the hunger of her rapid mouth; herds and flocks pass by unafraid; she looks and lies; for where are they whom she should nourish her dugs, whom, long awaited, she should load with massive prey?

***Thebaid*, X.849–52**	
quales mediis in nubibus aether | vidit Aloidas, cum cresceret impia tellus | despectura deos nec adhuc immane veniret | Pelion et trepidum iam tangeret Ossa Tonantem.	So the ether saw the Aloidae amid the clouds when the impious earth was growing as though to look down upon the gods; vast Pelion was not yet come and already Ossa touched the frightened Thunderer.

***Thebaid*, XI.7–8**	
Phlegrae ceu fessus anhelet | proelia et Encelado fumanti impresserit Aetnen.	[A]s though he were wearily panting the battles of Phlegra and had piled Aetna on smoking Enceladus.

***Thebaid*, XI.12–15**	
quantus Apollineae temerator matris Averno | tenditur; ipsae horrent, si quando pectore ab alto | emergunt volucres immensaque membra iacentis | spectant, dum miserae crescunt in pabula fibrae.	He stretches in bulk as large as the violator of Apollo's mother in Avernus; the birds shudder when they emerge from the depth of his breast and view the giant's prostrate limbs, as the miserable entrails grow again to feed them.

***Thebaid*, XI.27–31**	
indomitos ut cum Massyla per arva | armenti reges magno leo fregit hiatu | et contentus abit; rauci tunc comminus ursi, | tunc avidi venere lupi, rabieque remissa | lambunt degeneres alienae vulnera praedae.	So when in Massylian fields a lion has broken the untamed kings of the herd with his mighty jaws and goes away content; then growling bears and greedy wolves come up, low creatures, and with diminished rage lick the wounds of another's prey.

***Thebaid*, XI.42–44**	
ceu redeunt nubes, ceu circumflantibus Austris | alternus procumbit ager, ceu gurgite cano | nunc retegit bibulas, nunc induit aestus harenas.	So clouds come back, so crops fall flat in turn as the South Winds veer, so with white water the tide now bares the clothes of the thirsty sands.

***Thebaid*, XI.114–15**	
ut Notus et Boreas gemino de cardine mundi, | hic nive Rhipaea, Libycis hic pastus harenis, | bella cient: clamant amnes, freta, nubila, silvae, | iamque patent strages; plangunt sua damna coloni | et tamen oppressos miserantur in aequore nautas.	Even so South Wind and North stir up war from the two pivots of the world, the one fed on Rhipaean snow, the other on Libyan sands; rivers, seas, clouds, and woods clamour and disaster is already plain to see; farmers bewail their losses and yet pity sailors overwhelmed in the deep.

***Thebaid*, XI.193–95**	
veluti cum vere reverso | Bistoniae tepuere nives; summittitur ingens | Haemus et angustos Rhodope descendit in amnes.	[A]s when with spring's return Bistonian snows grow warm; mighty Haemus is bowed, and Rhodope descends into the straightened rivers.

***Thebaid*, XI.218–19**	
ceu regia caeli | attemptata tui.	As though your own heavenly palace were attempted.

***Thebaid*, XI.234–38**	
qualis ubi implicitum Tirynthius ossibus ignem | sensit et Oetaeas membris accedere vestes, | vota incepta tamen libataque tura ferebat | durus adhuc patiensque mali; mox grande coactus | ingemuit, victorque furit per viscera Nessus.	So when the Tirynthian felt the fire deep in his bones and the Oetaean robe clinging to his limbs, he none the less continued to offer prayer begun and incense already poured, still hard and patient of the pain; presently perforce he gave a great groan and Nessus rages victorious through his vitals.

***Thebaid*, XI.251–56**	
sic uti regnator post exsulis otia tauri | mugitum hostilem summa tulit aure iuvencus | agnovitque minas, magna stat fervidus ira | ante gregem spumisque animos ardentibus efflat, | nunc pede torvus humum, nunc cornibus aëra findens; | horret ager, trepidaeque exspectant proelia valles.	So when a ruling bull after the peace of his rival's exile hears with the trip of his ear a hostile lowing and recognizes the threat, he stands before the herd aflame with mighty wrath and exhales his passion in ardent foam, splitting the groud with his hoof and the air with his horns; the land shudders and the quaking valleys await the battle.

***Thebaid*, XI.274**	
urbem armis opisbusque gravem et modo civibus artam, | ceu caelo deiecta lues inimicave tellus, hauisti, vacuamque tamen sublimis obumbras.	This city, potent in arms and wealth and lately thronged with citizens, you have drained like a plague sent down from the sky or a hostile earth, and yet your shadow towers aloft over its emptiness.

***Thebaid*, XI.284–86**	
ceu mutus et e grege sanguis | (ei mihi!) primitiis ararum et rite nefasto | libatus iussusque mori.	[L]ike a dumb beast of the flock (woe is me!), sprinkled with the altar's first-fruits in an unholy rite and ordered to die.

***Thebaid*, XI.310–14**	
ictus ut incerto pastoris vulnere serpens | erigitur gyro longumque e corpore toto | virus in ora legit; paulum si devius hostis | torsit iter, cecidere minae tumefactaque	As a snake struck at random by a shepherd rises up in a coil and gathers length of poison from his whole body into his mouth, but if his enemy slants his steps away a little, the threats subside, the neck that swelled to no

frustra | colla sedent, irasque sui bibit ipse veneni.	purpose settles down, and he drinks the wrath of his own venom.

***Thebaid*, XI.318–20**	
Pentheia qualis | mater ad insani scandebat culmina montis, | promissum saevo caput allatura Lyaeo.	Like the mother of Pentheus climbing to the top of the mad mountain to bring the promised head to cruel Lyaeus.

***Thebaid*, XI.443–46**	
qualis | demissus curru laevae post praemia sortis | umbrarum custos mundique novissimus heres | palluit, amisso veniens in Tartara caelo.	Even as the warden of the shades and last heir of the world descending from his chariot after the adverse lot's assignment grew pale on entering Tatarus with heaven lost.

***Thebaid*, XI.461**	
ceu soror infelix pugnantum aut anxia mater.	[L]ike a hapless sister or anquished mother of the combatants.

***Thebaid*, XI.483**	
caelestique ocior igne.	[S]wifter than celestial fire.

***Thebaid*, XI.529**	
alternaque saevi | murmura ceu lituos rapiunt aut signa tubarum.	[A]nd in their rage they catch each other's sounds like signals of trumpets or bugle.

***Thebaid*, XI.587–92**	
qualis si puppe relicta | exosus manes pigri sulcator Averni | exeat ad superos solemque et pallida turbet | astra, nec ipse diu fortis patiensque superni | aëris; interea longum cessante magistro | crescat opus, totisque exspectent saecula ripis.	It was as if the cleaver of lazy Avernus, weary of the dead, were to leave his bark and go to the upper world to trouble sun and paling stars, himself not stout for long or patient of the upper air; meanwhile the long work grows as the skipper lags and the generations wait all along the banks.

***Thebaid*, XI.644–47**	
qualis Marathonide silva | flebilis Erigone caesi prope funera patris | questibus absumptis tristem iam solvere nodum | coeperat et fortes ramos moritura legebat.	So sorrowful Erigone weeping in the Marathonian wood beside the body of her slain father, her plaints exhausted, began to untie the sad knot and choose sturdy branches intent on death.

***Thebaid*, XI.741–47**	
qualis leo rupe sub alta, | quem viridem quondam silvae montesque tremebant, | iam piger et longo iacet exarmatus ab aevo, | magna tamen facies et non adeunda senectus; | et si demissas veniat mugitas ad	Like to a lion under a high crag, at whom in his prime forest and mountain once trembled; now he lies inactive, disarmed by length of years, yet his face is grand and his old age best left alone; and if a sound of

aures, | erigitur meminitque sui, viresque solutas | ingemit et campis alios regnare leones.	lowing come to his drooping ears, he rises up and remembers himself, groaning for his strength decayed and that other lions bear lordship in the plains.

***Thebaid*, XII.12–13**	
ut assiduo iactatis aequore tellus | prima labat, sic attoniti nil comminus ire | mirantur fusasque putant assurgere turmas.	As for men long tossed upon the sea the earth heaves at first, so in shock they wonder that nothing opposes them and imagine that the routed squadrons are rising against them.

***Thebaid*, XII.15–21**	
sic ubi perspicuae scandentem limina turris | Idaliae volucres fulvum aspexere draconem, | intus agunt natos et feta cubilia vallant | unguibus imbellesque citant ad proelia pennas; | mox ruerit licet ille retro, tamen aëra nudum | candida turba timet, tandemque ingressa volatus | horret et a mediis etiamnum respicit astris.	So when Idalian birds have seen a tawny snake climbing the threshold of a conspicuous tower, they drive their chicks inside and fence their full nests with their claws and rouse unwarlike wings to battle; though presently he hasten backward, the white flock fear the naked air and, launching at last on flight, still look back in terror from amid the stars.

***Thebaid*, XII.66–67**	
haud aliter quam cum poscentibus astris | laetus in accensa iacuit Tirynthius Oeta.	[N]ot otherwise than the Tirynthian lay joyfully on kindled Oeta as the stars claimed him.

***Thebaid*, XII.107**	
ceu capta manus.	[L]ike a band of captives.

***Thebaid*, XII.155–57**	
immites citius Busiridos aras | Odrysiique famem stabuli Siculosque licebit | exorare deos.	Sooner will there be means to appease the merciless altars of Busiris and the hunger of the Odrysian stable and the gods of Sicily.

***Thebaid*, XII.169–72**	
non secus afflavit molles si quando iuvencas | tigridis Hyrcanae ieiunum murmur, et ipse | auditu turbatus ager, timor omnibus ingens, | quae placeat, quos illa fames escendat in armos.	Even so when the famished roar of a Hyrcanian tigress is wafted toward the gentle heifers, the very land is troubled by the hearing; great fear seizes all: which will she choose, what shoulders will that hunger mount?

***Thebaid*, XII.224–27**	
nocte velut Phrygia cum lamentata resultant | Dindyma, pinigeri rapitur Simoentis ad amnem | dux vesana chori, cuius dea	As upon a Phrygian night when Dindymus resounds with lamentation, the leader of the band in her madness whirls to pine-bearing Simois' river; the goddess herself had

sanguine lecto | ipsa dedit ferrum et vittata fronde notavit.	chosen her blood, given the knife, and marked her out with wool-bound wreath.

***Thebaid*, XII.270–77**	
qualis ab Aetnaeis accensa lampade saxis | orba Ceres magnae variabat imagine flammae | Ausonium Siculumque latus, vestigia nigri | raptoris vastosque legens in pulvere sulcos; | illius insanis ululatibus ipse remugit | Enceladus ruptoque vias illuminat igni: | Persephonen amnes silvae freta nubila clamant; | Persephonen tantum Stygii tacet aula mariti.	So Ceres in her bereavement, lighting her brand from Aetna's rocks, cast the image of her mighty flame here and there over the coasts of Ausonia and Sicily, following the track of the dark ravisher, vast furrows in the dust; Enceladus himself booms back to her mad outcry and his fire breaks out to light her path; rivers, woods, sea, and clouds cry 'Persephone,' 'Persephone': only the palace of the Stygian groom cries not.

***Thebaid*, XII.356–58**	
fremitu quo territat agros | virginis ira leae, rabies cui libera tandem | et primus sine matre furor.	[W]ith a cry like the angry roar of a virgin lioness, striking terror into the countryside, her rage free at last and her fury for the first time without her dam.

***Thebaid*, XII.413–15**	
sic Hyperionium tepido Phaëthonta sorores | fumantem lavere Pado; vixdum ille sepulcro | conditus, et flentes stabant ad flumina silvae.	So his sisters washed smoking Phaëthon, Hyperion's son, in the warm Padus; scarce was he entombed, and the grove stood weeping by the riverside.

***Thebaid*, XII.433–35**	
pallidus Eumenidum veluti commiserit ignes | Orcus, uterque minax globus et conatur uterque | longius.	As though pale Orcus had set the torches of the Furies in conflict, each mass of fire threatens and tries to outstrip the other.

***Thebaid*, XII.478–80**	
Geticae non plura queruntur | hospitibus tectis trunco sermone volucres, | cum duplices thalamos et iniquum Terea clamant.	The Getic birds make no greater moan with their mutilated speech in their guest-dwelling as they cry out against a double marriage chamber and the injustice of Tereus.

***Thebaid*, XII.515–18**	
ceu patrio super alta grues Aquilone fugatae | cum videre Pharon, tunc aethera latius implent, | tunc hilari clangore sonant; iuvat orbe sereno | contempsisse nives et frigora solvere Nilo.	Even as cranes put to flight over the deep by their native North Wind, when they see Pharos, then they fill the sky more widely, then they make a gladsome noise; in a cloudless heaven they are happy to have scorned the snows and to thaw their chill with Nile.

***Thebaid*, XII.559**	
ceu sator Eumenidum aut Lethaei portitor amnis.	[A]s though he were father of the Furies or ferryman of Lethe river.

***Thebaid*, XII.601–05**	
ut modo conubiis taurus saltuque recepto | cum posuit pugnas, alio si forte remugit | bellatore nemus, quamquam ora et colla cruento | imbre madent, novus arma parat campumque lacessens | dissimulat gemitus et vulnera pulvere celat.	So when a bull has recovered his brides and pasture and put fighting behind him, if perchance the forest resound with the lowing of another warrior, though his head and neck drip with bloody rain, he prepares his arms anew and pawing the field conceals his groans, hiding his wounds with dust.

***Thebaid*, XII.650–55**	
qualis Hyperboreos ubi nubilus institit axes | Iuppiter et prima tremefecit sidera bruma, | rumpitur Aeolia et longam indignata quietem | tollit Hiems animos ventosaque sibilat Arctos; | tunc montes undaeque fremunt, tunc proelia caecis | nubibus et tonitrus insanaque fulmina gaudent.	So when Jupiter takes his stand in cloud upon the Hyperborean pole and shakes the stars with the start of winter, Aeolia is fractured and Storm, chafing at long idleness, plucks up the courage and the blustering Bear whistles: then mountains and waves roar, then battles are in the blind clouds, thunders and mad lightnings reveal.

***Thebaid*, XII.728–29**	
ventorum velut ira minor, nisi silva furentes | impedit, insanique tacent sine litore fluctus.	[J]ust as the anger of the winds diminishes if no forest hampers their fury and the mad waves are mute without a shore.

***Thebaid*, XII.739–40**	
sic iuvat exanimis proiectaque praeda canesque | degeneresque lupos, magnos alit ira leones.	So dogs and degenerate wolves love lifeless prey cast at their feet, but anger feeds mighty lions.

***Thebaid*, XII.787–88**	
gaudent matresque nurusque | Ogygiae, qualis thyrso bellante subactus | mollia laudabat iam marcidus orgia Ganges.	Ogygian mothers and brides rejoice, even as Ganges, subdued by the battling wand, praised unwarlike revels, already in liquor.

***Thebaid*, XII.791–93**	
quales Bacchea ad bella vocatae | Thyiades amentes, magnum quas poscere credas | aut fecisse nefas.	[L]ike mad Thyiads summoned to Bacchic wars; you might think they were demanding some great crime, or had committed one.

Part II

In this section citations are given of similes found in the Middle Irish *Thebaid* which do not appear in Statius's epic.

Irish Simile – based on *Thebaid* text

***Thebaid*, I.97–98**	***TnT*, 195–96**
sensit adesse Dies, piceo Nox obvia nimbo | lucentes turbavit equos.	[T]anic fordorchud dar dreich *in* talman uile amal aidchi.
Day felt her at hand, Night met him with a pitchy cloud and scared his bright horses.	[T]hick darkness like night overspread all earth's face.

***Thebaid*, I.536–39**	***TnT*, 479–82**
nova deinde pudori | visa virum facies: pariter pallorque ruborque | purpureas hausere genas, oculique verentes | ad sanctum rediere patrem.	[U]a deirgither losa liac gnuisi 7 aichthi na n-ingen sin, 7 ba baine linscoit lenead arna langlanad in fecht araill ri met na naire rogob iat ac sillead 7 faicsin na fear coem coimthech [...]
Then they saw men's visages, new to their bashful eyes. Pallor and blush together consumed their radiant cheeks, and their eyes in shame returned to their reverend sire.	[A]s red as foxgloves were the faces and countenances of those maidens [...]
	[…] 7 ba baine linscoit lenead arna langlanad in fecht araill ri met na naire rogob iat ac sillead 7 faicsin na fear coem coimthech.
	[…] and at another time as white as the linen of a smock after a full cleansing at the greatness of the shame which seized them, as they glanced at and beheld the handsome foreign men.

***Thebaid*, II.544**	***TnT*, 928–29**
tunc horrere comae sanguisque in corda gelari.	[C]o raergestair a fholt caem curchanach amar scaith sciath sciach.
His hair stood on end and the blood froze to his heart.	[S]o that his beautiful bushy hair rose like the bristling defence of a hawthorn.

***Thebaid*, IV.129–30**	***TnT*, 1453**
capiti tremit aerea cassis | ter niveum scandente iuba.	[C]oma samalta re snechta ara sargili ima cend.
On his head sways a brazen helm with triply–climbing snowy plume.	[S]o that it was like snow for its exceeding whiteness on his head.

***Thebaid*, IV.221–22**	***TnT*, 1518–19**
procul ipse gravi metuendus in hasta | eminet.	[A]mail ralaig roremair i fhaicsin os cind a charpait in rig sin.

Himself towers far seen with his weighty spear.	[L]ike a very stout stately oak to be seen over the chariot of that king.

***Thebaid*, VI.431**	***TnT*, 2347–48**
ante tamen cunctos.	Et ge rabui, dochuaid sin urchur saigti sithguirmi andsin do gregaib glanailli Grec.
[Y]et he is ahead of them all.	And though it was so doing, it went a shot of a long blue arrow away from the bright and beautiful steeds of the Greeks.

***Thebaid*, VI.638–39**	***TnT*, 2463–64**
vix campus euntem | sentit, et exilis plantis intervenit aër.	[B]a samalta na taidled in talmain ara luas dorethad.
[T]he track scarce feels his passage, meagre the air that comes between his feet.	[I]t was like as if he did not touch the earth owing to the speed with which he ran.

***Thebaid*, VI.777–78**	***TnT*, 2524–25[681]**
ut praeceps cumulo salit unda minantes | in scopulos et fracta redit, sic ille furentem | circumit expugnans.	[A]mal timchillis feith fidu.
As a wave gathers and leaps in a rush at threatening rocks, then returns broken, so he circles his angry adversary, storming his defense.	[A]s honeysuckle encompasses woods.

***Thebaid*, IX.36**	***TnT*, 3363–66**
deriguit iuvenis.	Et gid ed o cualaig-sium a deimin, rosocht fair coma cruaidhither re crandlaem gach n-alt 7 gach n-aigi de o chind co bond [...]
The young man froze.	And yet when he yet when he heard the certainty of it, silence fell upon him so that every joint and every muscle from head to sole became as hard as a handstaff [...]
	[...] 7 robanad imi mar scoith-[sh]eamair [...]
	[...] and he blanched like a flowering clover [...]
	[...] no mar lenid ar na lantuar.
	[...] or like a fully bleached smock.

***Thebaid*, XI.501–02**	***TnT*, 4497**
illa viam medium clipei conata per orbem | non perfect ictus atque vincitur auro.	Fuirmis Polinices an sciath 'na hagaid cur-sciend di amal carraicc.
The weapon makes to drive through the mid orb of the shield and is overcome by the deep-set gold.	Polynices planted his shield against it, so that it rebounded as if from a rock.

[681] See also *TnT*, 2525–26 under 'Close translation'.

Irish Simile – not based on *Thebaid* text

***TnT*, 2811–12 (cf. *Thebaid*, VII. 625–27)**	
[N]o mar bad he in la bratha brigurduirc brec[dh]uileach tisad do smurchaicilt in betha.	[O]r as it were the intent-revealing lie-desiring day of judgement that should come to rake up the ash hearth of the world.

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